THE

THEATRICAL RECORDER:

BY

THOMAS HOLCROFT.

CONTENTS OF NUMBER VII.

THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS, a Comedy; from the French of Mademoiselle de St. Leger.

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST, an ancient Mystery; from the Italian.

THE FATHER OUTWITTED, an Interlude; from the Spanish of Lope de Vega.

REMARKS upon each.

BIOGRAPHY of Lope de Vega.

NEW PIECE.

Youth, Love, and Folly.

ART OF ACTING.

Hamlet, a Class: his Genius and Requisites.

ESSAY ON DRAMATIC COMPOSITION.

Injurious Effects of pretending to observe the Unities.

HISTORY OF THE GERMAN STAGE.

Alceste, Wieland, and Schweitzer: Goethe, Goetz von Berlichingen, and Clavigo: Monodramas: Prague: Baron de Neselrode.

DRAMATIC ANECDOTES.

Piron: Le Grande: Origin of Farce: Gaultier-Garguille, Gros-Guillaume, and Turlupin: Comedians and Cardinal de Richelieu: The Farce of the Dead Man: Corneille: A Horse Roscius: Rich and Garrick.

MISCELLANIES.

Verses on Wilks the Actor: Premature Children: Danger of early Excitement: Epilogue by a Child: Master Wigley, on the Bugle-horn: Miss Fisher: Children of Schirmer, and new German Theatre: Fracas at the Opera: Close of the Theatres: Costume.

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THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS:

A COMEDY,

IN ONE ACT,

TRANSLATED FROM

THE FRENCH OF MADEMOISELLE DE ST. LEGER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M. DE FLORVAL.

SERVANT.

MADAME DE MELCOUR.

ROSETTA, } her Daughters
EUGENIA, }

LISETTA, a Chambermaid.

THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS:

A COMEDY, IN ONE ACT.

SCENE I.

The Hall of Madame DE MELCOUR: LISETTA, *alone.*

Lisetta.

A Love-letter, in the hands of a chambermaid, ought to turn to gold: and so it has already. M. de Versac gave me two louis-d'ors only to make presentation of this to my young lady, with whom, having seen her once at a ball, he has fallen in love. Love for the mistress means generosity to the maid. Miss Rosetta is coming: I am hired to watch her conduct, and give her prudent advice; but, is it to my interest? (*puts the letter in her apron pocket.*)

SCENE II.—*Enter* ROSETTA.

Ros. My dear Lisetta, here you are! How I love you!—What is it you are hiding so carefully? It is something about me, I am sure!

Lis. Poh! No such thing.

Ros. Let me see. I will lay my life it comes from you know who! Do but look—why do you pout, Lisetta?

Lis. Pout! Oh, no, Miss; I am lately become too great a favorite.

Ros. Oh, I put the utmost confidence in you, and love you dearly. It is very true! So put off that borrowed air. Now have not you seen him? Does he love me still? I'll wager that note is from him. You laugh! Sha'n't we read it together, Lisetta?

Lis. Read it indeed! There will be no reading, from *him* or not from *him.*

Ros. (*pouting*) Why so?

Lis. Why so! You are your mamma's pet, and what would she say, should she come to know it?

Ros. But she sha'n't, since you kindly are in the interest of——

Lis. Of a husband, but not of a lover.

Ros. Oh, he'll marry me: be sure of that. But then I'm so young.

Lis. Young, at seventeen!

Ros. You are as dull to-day, Lisetta, as my mamma's friend.

Lis. Meaning young De Florval! So you find a handsome youth of five and twenty dull! That is because he likes your sister.

Ros. (*vexed*) What is my sister to me? With her downcast eyes and prim modesty! Mamma says my eyes are a hundred times more animated than hers.

Lis. Oh, yes! Your eyes have *a meaning!* Your mamma spoils you a little, and you teach her to dislike your sister: but, leave her alone; she'll have her turn, I tell you that.

Ros. You want to vex me: but I'll take nothing ill that you say.

Lis. Ha! sweet tempered dear!

Ros. (*flattering*) If you would but—How kind it would be!—I would never forget the obligation.

Lis. So! But it won't all do.

Ros. Very well! I was thinking to myself what a pleasure I should have to give you this fine comfit-box, all set in gold. I told my mamma that I had lost it, purposely that I might give it you. But, keep your letter, and I will keep my box!

Lis. Humph! Who cares! Can a comfit-box tell you a love-story? No, no: but a letter full of angels, and dears, and darts, and death—It gives one such pleaure! One could read it a thousand times!

Ros. (*turns her back, and presents the box, which* Lisetta *takes*) You don't know how sweet the comfits are!

Lis. (*giving the letter in the same way*) You don't know how sweet his words are!

Ros. Now you are my own dear Lisetta! (*reads*) "Oh, when shall I again see my charmer! Happiness fled from me, like a shadow, when you left the assembly, where you reigned a goddess." *A goddess, Lisetta!* "I saw no woman but you." *None but me!* "When you were gone, the temple which you illuminated became dark. Princess of my thoughts! why do you thus imperiously tyrannize? Why rob me of repose, sleep, and reason?" *He is quite mad with love, Lisetta!* "Tell me, when again shall I admire such wondrous beauty? Speak: love has a thousand stratagems." *What a charming letter!*

SCENE III.—*Enter Madame* De Melcour.

Mad. de M. What are you doing, child?

Ros. (*confused, with her hand behind her, giving back the letter to* Lisetta) N— n— nothing, mamma.

Lis. (*concealing the letter*) Oh, nothing at all, Madam.

Mad. de M. I am sorry for it. If you loved me, you would apply yourself to your duties, and that would make you happy.

Ros. (*fondling her mother*) I'll go directly, my dear, dear mamma.

Mad. de M. I can conceive that an ungrateful child might disobey an imperious mother; but can advice, given with affection, and meant to insure future happiness, be neglected?

Ros. My music-master has been here; I practised my lesson, and he was so pleased—so pleased!

Lis. (*aside*) To be sure, at being well paid.

Mad. de M. Let emulation inspire you. Think that, the greater your talents, the greater will be your pleasures; and that you will one day be the more useful to your children. I see, with regret, that your sister has the most application, Rosetta.

Ros. (*gapes*) My sister is so melancholy! So unlike me!

Lis. (*aside*) Very unlike indeed.

Mad. de M. I love your cheerful temper, my dear; but, recollect, those smiles are the sweetest which arise from self-satisfaction. Do you understand me?

Ros. (*gaping*) Yes, mamma. I will do any thing to please you.

Lis. (*aside*) You will *say* any thing.

Mad. de M. If so, bring the embroidery, Lisetta; we will sit and work together. [*Exit* Lisetta.

SCENE IV.

Mad. de M. I am too serious, perhaps. You shall soon go to the ball, where, the last time, you were so much amused, and I will accompany you.

Ros. You—Why should you go, mamma?

Mad. de M. The eye of a mother should be watchful over her children. I was not well, when you went before; but I knew your company, and beside, I trusted you to Lisetta.

Ros. (*aside*) I shall see him again, however!

Mad. de M. Were is your sister?

Ros. In her chamber, reading.

Mad. de M. How serious, at her age!

Ros. She makes me so dull, mamma! I can't stay in the same place. Her whole discourse is—— (*mimicking*) Yes, sister: no, sister: true, sister; it may be so. Ha, ha, ha!

Mad. de M. Some tempers are more reserved than others. (*aside*) The honest heart is always open; but Eugenia is continually cautious, keeping all her thoughts to herself. (Rosetta *caresses her mother*) Yes, Rosetta, thou art my delight! Be frank of heart, banish constraint and dissimulation from a mother, whose friendship, like her affection, is unbounded!

SCENE V.—*Enter* EUGENIA.

Eug. (*with great timidity*) May I be permitted to work by the side of my mamma?

Mad. de M. (*kindly*) Why ask me that question, my dear? It is a right which you always have. Children with their mother, and a mother with her children! Is not that happiness? (Rosetta *affects fondness for her mother, who makes signs to her to forbear.*)

Eug. I perceive, mamma, I put you under constraint. (*offering to go.*)

Mad. de M. (*aside*) Always suspicious! I can scarcely contain myself! (*aloud*) Why do you doubt my sincerity? Do you first judge and then condemn your mother?

Eug. (*aside*) I wish I might indulge my tears!

Mad. de M. (*with rising vexation*) Yes, yes! Talk to yourself! Keep your thoughts concealed! Let none of your feelings escape! If you studied to make me happy, you would change your behaviour. Why don't you sit down? You are no sooner here than you wish to be gone!

Eug. Dear mamma, you are never angry with any body but me.

Mad. de M. A reproach! And I the sufferer! (Eugenia *is going*) Stay, Miss! (*tenderly*) Sit down by my side, child: on Thursday you shall go to the ball; you love dancing, and I hope you will there find amusement.

Ros. For my part, nobody need ask me twice to amuse myself.

Mad. de M. (*to* Eugenia) Well, child?

Eug. Did you speak to me, mamma?

Mad. de M. To whom else! (*aside*) So far from guessing my thought, she does not listen to me! (*aloud*) Will the dress that I ordered for you be ready?

Eug. I don't know, mamma.

Mad. de M. (*vexed*) So much the worse! At your age, girls are not so indifferent to dress.

Ros. Oh, my dear, dear mamma, had you but seen how the young Misses envied me the other day! Don't you remember, Eugenia, how shockingly that tiresome woman was dressed, who looked so foolish, and called for nothing but old country dances, out of fashion?

Eug. I have a bad memory for such things.

Mad. de M. (*to* Rosetta) Your sister means to reprove you, my dear.

Eug. (*with emotion*) By no means, mamma! Pray do not think so!

Mad. de M. Why are you so soon terrified? I am pleased that the ridiculous escapes you, which your more critical sister

so well remembers. Take care of yourself, Rosetta; for you will be in great danger, if you speak so freely before strangers.

Lis. (*entering*) Your master of geography is come, ladies. [*Exit.*

Mad. de M. Go, my children: be patient and assiduous. (Rosetta *kisses her mother:* Eugenia, *with timidity, makes a low courtesy, and they both retire.*)

SCENE VI.

Mad. de M. Why did she not kiss me, like her sister? Did she need bidding? To command affection is to lose it. How does my heart feel the difference between them—Well, Rosetta will be happy! M. Florval is delighted that she will be the wife of his son. And where could I find her a better husband; a youth of a milder temper, or more amiable manners?

SCENE VII.—*Enter a* Servant, *and* M. De Florval.

Serv. M. de Florval. [*Exit.*

Mad. de M. Why didn't you come to dinner, Florval? You know my friendship, and that I wish you to think my house your own.

Flor. My respect and gratitude, Madam——

Mad. de M. Enough. (*they sit*) I want to speak to you. Ah!

Flor. Why that sigh.

Mad. de M. Who has no cause of sorrow?

Flor. Let me partake your grief, whatever it be.

Mad de M. I'll not be so ungenerous. Pleasure is the delight of youth.

Flor. (*with ardor*) But not insensibility: deign to trust me?

Mad. de M. People think me a happy mother, but this delightful happiness is often disturbed.

Flor. (*aside*) Has she heard of the rashness of Versac? (*aloud*) You surprise me! Has your darling Rosetta——

Mad. de M. Why my *darling?* I prefer nothing in her, but her charming affectionate manner. Ah, you know not the power of a child's caresses! Frank and ingenuous, she opens her whole heart to her mother: its emotions are visible, and therefore its mistakes are harmless. The mother is honored, and flattered, who owes every thing to confidence, in her child, and nothing to constraint!

Flor. How these sentiments become you, Madam! But, be assured, Eugenia, though more timid, is not less tender.

Mad. de M. It is that fear which distresses me. I never speak to my children with a frowning brow. The art of education is to persuade: I have more indulgence for them than any person, not a mother, would have; and Rosetta has none of that timidity, which alarms me in her sister. Her caresses are unstudied! She runs to my arms when she pleases, unable to resist the

sweet impulse of affection! To prolong her confidence, I prolong her childhood, as it were; that she may enjoy its happy privileges. Though a year younger, Eugenia gives signs of intelligence that is premature. Her thoughts hidden, and subject to no such sweet feelings, she avoids my sight, kills my affection, and repulses all my efforts. I have mentioned this only to you, dear Florval, but she often makes me shed tears.

Flor. Dear Madam, beware! There is danger in mistake. Every look denotes her sensibility. She stands in awe of you, and that awe is in proportion to her love. In her I daily discover a thousand virtues; and her timidity is one, a precious one, too, to your sex, while it is delightful to ours. At sixteen, what woman is not timid? Show me one, and I shall fear her! Pray pardon me, but affection is seldom impartial: the heart may be just, yet seduced.

Mad. de M. The reproach touches me. A first-born child must be dear to a mother, and its caresses are not easily forgotten; but, if ever I have suffered Eugenia to perceive this, I pronounce myself guilty!

Flor. She has never thought you so.

Mad. de M. I suspect both myself and her. Show me how I can read her heart! I remark the confidence she has in you: I will send her to you; tell her I mean that she shall immediately go to a convent. Observe her well: discover every feeling of her heart: if she grieves to leave me, if you see her tears—forgive me, but those tears will make me happy!

Flor. This proof will show her affection.

Mad. de M. Alas, I fear not. [*Exit.*

SCENE VIII.

Flor. Tender but mistaken mother! You suspect a heart which is all your own, and are blind to that, which is all a counterfeit! You confide in the candor of Rosetta, while she is practising deceit! The coxcomb, Versac, told me all himself. He has dared to confess a passion, where his manners forbid him all hopes of marriage! Must I see Eugenia only to afflict her? I am strangely moved! It is no dream; it is love! My heart is devoted to the virtuous Eugenia! When I thought of love, I thought of her. I must disguise my feelings.

SCENE IX.—*Enter* EUGENIA.

Eug. (*aside*) How I tremble! I dare not speak.

Flor. Dear Eugenia! Surely you are not afraid of *me* too? So good and tender a mother, a friend—who thinks but of you, whose only happiness would be to give you pleasure, should they inspire timidity and constraint?

Eug. I fear I have many faults, but I am not ungrateful.

Flor. (*transported*) Ungrateful! No, no: never! never! Yet, dear Eugenia, I never see you kiss your mamma! Why deprive yourself of so sweet a pleasure? Innocent caresses—

Eug. When my sister is in her arms, oh that I might but kiss her feet! How happy should I be!

Flor. And you encourage her mistake! Grieved to see you so melancholy, not knowing how to act, either from excess of delicacy, or suspecting your heart of coldness, she—she is taking a step that afflicts her. However averse she may feel, yet she proposes immediately to send you to a convent.

Eug. And I shall not see her every day! Alas!—Well! If it will make my mamma happy, so be it! I often perceive that I distress her: when I am present, she is embarrassed: then let me go! When I return, perhaps, my acquirements may render me more worthy of her.

Flor. Be well assured, she will feel the want of her Eugenia.

Eug. *Her* Eugenia! How tenderly you pronounce the word! Ah! mamma never calls me *her* Eugenia!

Flor. The more I hear, the more I am convinced how much it is in your power to make so good a mother happy!

Eug. I do all I can. She greatly desires that my sister should employ her time, and I secretly work for her every day. When my mamma was ill, and Rosetta was not quite so much in fear of her recovery as I was, I often went into the sick chamber, and my mamma would kindly ask—"Is it you, my dear Rosetta?" On which I used to disguise my voice, and, though it was wrong, perhaps, whisper—"Yes, my dear mamma:" because it made her happy, and she recovered her health; though I used to go out of the room and cry.

Flor. I cannot contain my raptures!

Eug. How you look!

Flor. (*going to fall on his knees, turns hastily, and then returns*) Eugenia! Dear Eugenia! (*aside*) Her youth, her innocence, the respect she inspires, the confidence placed in me by her mother—— No! I will not betray my thoughts! Oh, love——!

SCENE X.—*Enter Madame* De Melcour.

Mad. de M. Her countenance is unaltered: quite calm! (*to* Eugenia) Seeking only your ease and happiness, I have taken a resolution, which must afflict a tender mother: but it cannot be helped! You know my meaning?

Eug. It is my duty to obey you, mamma.

Mad. de M. Go to your chamber.

SCENE XI.

Flor. Why are you thus agitated, Madam.

Mad. de M. Do not ask me? Submission from my children I

might well expect; but was submission, in this instance, the sympathy my heart required?

Flor. Still in a mistake! Ah, had you heard your dear Eugenia! Never was there a more tender heart! Every purpose of it is to make you happy. She talks of you, and nothing but you; thinks her absence necessary to your repose; and submits, joyfully, without a murmur! Her mother's voice is a command from Heaven. You doubt! The mist that covers your eyes is too visible! Suffer me to disperse it, by putting both your daughters to the proof. Ask me not what I mean; but, be assured, my own heart is too deeply interested not to act with caution.

Mad. de M. A thousand thanks! With respect to yourself, I have the consolation of having been secretly active in your behalf. The most precious gift I have on earth I intend for you.

Flor. For me, Madam! Kind Heavens!—Eugenia——

Mad. de M. Yes, my young friend, Rosetta is yours. But—what ails you? How pale you are turned!

SCENE XII.—*Enter* LISETTA.

Lis. Ah, Madam, Eugenia yonder is in a flood of tears.

Mad. de M. (*enraptured*) In tears! Eugenia in tears!

Lis. (*aside*) It gives her pleasure! Ay, ay! It is plain enough! She does not love poor Eugenia as she does Miss Rosetta!

Mad. de M. Leave us. [*Exit* Lisetta.

SCENE XIII.

Flor. I conjure you, Madam, grant me the favor I have asked! You will then know your Eugenia better. Pray conceal yourself in that cabinet. Suffer me here to finish the conversation we had begun.

Mad. de M. What would you do!

Flor. Secure the happiness of mother and child.

Mad. de M. Since you insist—— Hush! I hear her. (*retires into the cabinet.*)

SCENE XIV.—*Enter* ROSETTA.

Ros. I thought my mamma was here! My sister is in such grief! You know why, I dare say? Do tell me? But you will never tell me any thing!

Flor. I might displease you, Rosetta, were I to speak too frankly; nay, give you pain; and tears disfigure beauty.

Ros. (*aside*) Humph! He's not so disgreeable as I thought him. (*aloud*) Then you would tell me all you know, if I should earnestly beg it of you.

Flor. Your prayers might be irresistible. The least afflicting intelligence is, Eugenia is to be sent to a convent.

Ros. A convent! Indeed! And does that give you pain?

Flor. Hum—By no means.

Ros. (*aside*) Is he too in love with me!

Flor. I hear she is to go to-morrow.

Ros. Well! It's a very fit place! My poor sister knows nothing of the world. I am very glad, for I seem like the favorite, and no comparisons will then be made.

Flor. (*aside, intending to be heard*) How can I afflict her? Let some one else suffer the pain of relating her misfortunes!

Ros. What misfortunes? You won't tell me? Is this the way you keep your promise?

Flor. Cruel! Thus to make me speak of what I would for ever conceal!

Ros. You frighten me! Speak! What do you mean? I insist!

Flor. Alas!

Ros. Was ever any thing so tormenting!

Flor. The blow is mortal, and you oblige me to strike!

Ros. What blow?

Flor. Your mamma——

Ros. (*impatiently*) Well! what of my mamma?

Flor. Is ruined!

Ros. Ruined! Did you say ruined (*bursting into tears*) Oh, Sir! Shall we keep no coach! no servants!

Flor. The most fearful poverty——

Ros. Oh! oh! oh! I can't suffer it! No, I can never endure to be poor. Do beg of my mamma to send me to the convent, with my sister. (*to* Eugenia, *as she enters*) Ah! you may well cry! Mamma is ruined! Oh! oh! oh! [*Exit.*

SCENE XV.

Eug. (*alarmed*) My dear mamma under misfortunes!

Flor. I grieve to afflict my dear Eugenia, but, since her widowhood, a man, who had every appearance of probity and was intrusted with the whole fortune of the family, is become a bankrupt.

Eug. (*in deep affliction*) Where is my poor dear mamma? How, Sir, can you leave her, at such a moment? (*taking off her ear-rings and necklace*) M. De Florval, you have always been very obliging to me: pray take these unnecessary trifles; sell them; get all the money on them that you can, and give it to mamma. Ah, a poor pittance! But I can embroider! I'll work—I'll work—I have one earnest request to make! Entreat, conjure my mother not to send me to a convent! I'll do the business of her house: I am strong, though I do not appear so.

The occupation of my sister shall be that of inventing every means to console her, and I will serve them both.

SCENE XVI.

Enter Madame DE MELCOUR, *running into the Arms of* EUGENIA.

Mad. de M. Forgive! forgive! Dear Eugenia, forgive thy mother!

Eug. And can I not soften your afflictions? Oh, mamma, that you were as happy as you now make me!

Mad. de M. That I cannot be, for I have wronged my child! I was cruelly abused, and delighted in deceit; but, hereafter, truth shall be my delight. Stifle not thy tears, my child; they prove the sweet feelings of thy heart! Yes, thou shalt be happy!

SCENE XVII.—*Enter* LISETTA.

Lis. Oh, Madam, must we lose my young lady? Every body is so grieved!

Mad. de M. No! Never can a mother banish such a child! The ungrateful only can deserve punishment; and, could I indulge such feelings, Rosetta—— Her name is a dagger to my heart! Let her not come in my sight.

Lis. (*alarmed*) What do you mean, Madam?

Mad. de M. (*ardently*) That my tenderness has been abused!

Lis. (*aside*) She knows all! I am ruined! (*aloud*) Pray, Madam, don't turn me away! Here is the letter of M. de Versac to Miss Rosetta: it is only the second he has sent, since he fell in love with her at the ball. I said I would give it to you, at a proper time, when I gave Miss so good a talking about it. Oh, yes, I talked to her! That I did—I talked!

Mad. de M. Versac! A letter! An intrigue! What mystery is this? (*aloud*) Retire, my dear, for a moment. Pray, Sir, leave me. Go, girl: tell Rosetta to come here, instantly, and do you never more appear in my presence.

Lis. Madam——

Mad. de M. Be gone! Your treachery is unpardonable.

[*Exeunt* Florval, Eugenia, *and* Lisetta, *successively.*

SCENE XVIII.

Mad. de M. Thus, then, by my negligence, have I risked the happiness of my child! and, while I arrogate to myself the right to reprove her, she may justly sit in judgment upon the conduct of her mother! On every side, my heart is torn! Here she comes—I feel my weakness! Oh, I have loved her to idolatry!

SCENE XIX.—*Enter* ROSETTA.

Mad. de M. Come forward. Look not thus humbled, by the fear of poverty: there is worse disgrace. You are poor in virtue, not in wealth! You have lost a mother's tenderness: one who, before you were born—— What, so soon to renounce virtue, and become contemptible!

Ros. What have I done, mamma?

Mad. de M. (*giving the letter*) Read—but I am not astonished at your deceit, since you could *pretend* to love your mother.

Ros. Lisetta has betrayed me!

Mad. de M. Crime betrays itself! The man who could bribe servants, that he might seduce you, could only plunge you into ruin! Your letters are read by his boon companions.

Ros. I have not written any.

Mad. de M. Your folly will be public, and the good will tremble to think of the future audacity of a woman, who, while a girl, is so destitute of delicacy and every sense of shame! Wretched creature! I might well have doubted of *your* affection, but could you doubt of mine?

Ros. (*falling at her mother's feet*) Oh, mamma! Too well I deserve to lose it; but, if it is lost, I cannot live!

Mad. de M. Rise! 'Tis odious, when hypocrites kneel.

Ros. Mamma!

Mad. de M. A convent shall hide your ingratitude.

Ros. Dispose of me, I willingly submit; but send me not away in anger!

Mad. de M. (*aside*) I act severity in vain!

SCENE *the Last.*—*Enter* EUGENIA, *followed by* FLORVAL.

Mad. de M. (*to* Eugenia) Come to my arms, child of my heart! How can I ever repair the wrongs I have done thee! How have I been mistaken! Speak! Demand what thou wilt, it shall be granted!

Eug. Pardon! Pardon my sister!

Ros. Oh, Eugenia! Happy sister! You hereafter shall be my guide! Only join me in prayers to my mamma, whom I have too deeply offended, and to whose goodness I have been insensible! But I can be so no more: filial love, virtue—yes, I will still be her child, and the sister of Eugenia.

Mad. de M. Children! True, you are still my children. Let me find you so, and these are the happiest tears I ever shed. How much do I owe you, dear Florval! But I see the wish of your heart—Eugenia shall be yours.

Flor. Oh, happy man! Eugenia!

Mad. de M. (*to* Eugenia) Do not blush, my child, for you have no cause. You see the conduct, Rosetta, by which she has

gained the love of a virtuous youth: be that conduct your instructor. Our errors teach us how to act: take warning, by those I have committed, and know how deeply it is a mother's duty to be watchful of her children's happiness, and give them an equal place in her affections.

THE END.

REMARKS.

I HAVE real pleasure in presenting this little Comedy to the public, for its moral may truly be called delicious. It was first performed, in the year 1783, on one of the minor theatres of Paris. The characters are decidedly marked, but have not that broad humor which the English generally require. Humor and satire, it is true, are the soul of comedy; but buffoonery has long been the disgrace of the stage. To an audience not spoiled by habit, this little piece would give great delight: it would send both parents and children from the theatre, instructed in some most important duties, and delighted with the mode in which instruction is conveyed. When comedies of this class shall meet the applause they deserve, the powers of the stage over the morals of mankind shall then be justly appreciated. It is no little honor to the fair sex that many of these charming moral pieces have been written by women. The title of this little piece in French is *Les deux Sœurs,* and it is the production of Mademoiselle de Saint-Leger.

THE REPRESENTATION [OR DESCENT]

OF THE

HOLY GHOST,

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

In the original, the Dramatis Personæ are not given: they are as follow:

AN ANGEL.

SAINT JAMES.

—— PETER.

—— JOHN.

—— BARTHOLOMEW.

—— MATTHEW.

—— SIMON.

—— THOMAS.

—— PHILIP.

The HOLY GHOST is seen to descend.

THE VIRGIN MARY.

MARY MAGDALEN.

THE REPRESENTATION

OF THE

HOLY GHOST.

THE Angel appears and says to the Spectators,

Oh, ye, who are desirous of seeing that which is the foundation of your faith, rejoice; your wish shall now be accomplished: lend an attentive ear, and look; then shall you be made acquainted with the wonderful miracle of the Holy Ghost: now, be peaceable and content, and, if it please God, we will begin.

Saint James now comes, and raising his eyes to heaven, says,

I reflect, see, wish, and believe that it may be right to visit Mary; her excellent oratory is flattering to God: she can accomplish my desire. I will entreat her to exert the influence which she, a virgin mother, holdeth over her son; I will tell her the time is already passed, in which the Holy Ghost was to descend from heaven.

Saint Peter arriving goes toward Jerusalem to seek Mary, but seeing Saint James stops, saying,

Whither, James, art thou going, thus in tribulation?

Saint James answers, weeping, and embracing him:

Oh, Peter, I am right glad to see thee.

Saint Peter says:

Tell me why?

Saint James:

Since thou art there, I will tell thee; but do thou have the like complaisance.

Saint Peter replies:

I am bound to oblige thee.

Saint James says:

Now listen, Peter, and be my words precious to thee. It is my intention to visit the mother of Jesus Christ, that she may remind the Father it is time for God to send us the Holy Ghost from heaven.

Saint Peter with emotion replies:

Thy words expand my heart, and an equal zeal inflames my

soul. Let us go, and tell her to recommend us to the Son, that he may display to the Father the jealousy which consumes us, if this Envoy come not from above, to crown our zeal.

The Angel appears to the Apostles, to relieve them from suspense, and says:

Fervent, holy, and just Apostles, whatever your thoughts or wishes may be, put on a stouter countenance; for, to tell you the truth, you have the appearance of malefactors. If you delight, Apostles, in the faith of God, wait with a trusting heart; the favor you ask will soon be granted. Now be at peace; let this suffice.

The Angel being vanished, the Apostles remain in an ecstasy of divine love.

Saint Mary Magdalen says to the Virgin Mary, making her a respectful courtesy,

Since it is the will of thy Son, Mary, and he is content thou shouldst be inimitable, none are thy equals: I therefore will depart, with thy leave, for I am unworthy to be thy companion; but I will obey thee as a daughter: give me thy blessing and an embrace, and receive the visitors that anon will be here.

The Virgin Mary, looking at her, replies:

Is this the friendship and the affection which I thought thou didst bear me? Thou addest to my affliction. Oh, do not withdraw thyself from my love!

Mary Magdalen says:

I obey thee, noblest of mothers; and I hope thou wilt love me as a servant.

The Virgin Mary takes her by the hand, and answers:

Nay, as a sister.

The Magdalen:

It is not permitted.

The Virgin Mary:

Yes, it is.

The Magdalen:

That must not be: I am content to be thy servant; of greater honor I am unworthy.

The Virgin Mary, troubled at these words, says:

If thou wouldst not bring greater affliction on me, yield to my wish, my dear Magdalen.

Mary Magdalen replies:

What affliction, Mary?

The Virgin Mary:

That which thy words occasion.

The Magdalen:

That must not be. I am ready to oblige thee.

The Virgin Mary, well pleased, says:

My wish is then accomplished.

[*The two Marys again seat themselves.*]

Now Saint John, Saint Bartholomew, Saint Matthew, and Saint Simon, the Apostles, ascending a hill, their eyes and hands raised to heaven, inspired with divine ardor, and gazing on each other, say with one voice:

Let us all with pious zeal begin our journey, and go in search of Mary, the Mother of God. Let us proceed with good thoughts, prayers, and brotherly love; because such will always be grateful to Jesus, who, with his divine Angels, will not forsake us. Let us seek Mary, the Mother of God.

When they have proceeded a little way, they meet Saint Peter, and Saint James, whom they embrace. Saint Peter then says:

Where are you all going, thus in holy ecstasy?

Saint John replies:

We are going to seek the Holy Ghost.

Saint Bartholomew says:

Pray for us, since we have met thee.

Saint Matthew says:

Alas, Peter, do us this pleasure.

Saint Simon says:

Do not refuse us this favor.

Saint Peter answers:

Come all of you with me, and let us depart with joy and rejoicing, under the standard of Mary, the mother.

They all depart, saying:

Since, Mary, thou art to make us happy, this we request, and nothing more desire; that thou wilt guide us, empress, to thy kingdom: our thoughts fixed on thee, we are ready to depart; snatch us from the sorrows of age, and from the snares of the demon, who is the root of all evil, that thy prayer may be granted. Jesus, send thy Holy Spirit to the inspired, and let thy glory be our boast: deign to favor thy kneeling Apostles; who each, in his oraisons, invokes thee.

Saint Thomas says, by himself:

I have sought the Holy Ghost, through many countries, in vain; it is high time he should discover himself. Moreover, I have thoughts of relinquishing the search. Thomas, thou carriest thy courtesy too far; this peregrination is not to my liking. I will rest myself on the road side, till I have decided whither next to go.

He seats himself, Saint Philip finds him, and says:

Well met, faithful comrade.

Saint Thomas replies:

The same to thee. Say, where art thou going, my Philip?

Saint Philip says:

In search of the Holy Ghost, whom I have long wished to see.

Saint Thomas answers:

I too have sought him, and am now resting myself. I have put faith in dreams, and words, only to be mocked.

Saint Philip, grieving, replies:

Alas, Thomas, speak not thus! Knowest thou not that faith by itself is sufficient? Rise, and stay no longer here: fortunate is he who puts faith in the Lord. Speak no more the language of distrust; it will not procure thee what thou demandest of the Lord. Come, let us continue our search.

Saint Thomas, again taking his seat, says:

I tell thee, I will trouble myself no more.

The Angel, seeing them, appears, and says:

Your desire is agreeable to the Lord, and shall be granted; take this path. Knowest thou not, Thomas, the Lord is just; that the sword in its proper place can strike? Mend thy manners, and proceed with thy companion; thy comrades are before thee, on their road to the cloisters of Jerusalem, to visit Mary.

Saint Thomas, standing up erect, says in great affliction:

Alas, anger overcame me! I have wrongfully abused my God: my shilling is turned to a penny*. I have lost the grace of the Lord; he is, I am sure, incensed against me. Oh, my soul, who will bring thee consolation? The Lord, alas, parteth himself from thee, and thou art called to the abyss of hell!

Saint Philip, consoling him, says:

Be comforted, God pardons thee: heardest thou not the angelic words? The heavenly crown will be thine. Let us seek those who are before us.

Saint Thomas replies:

I am thy inseparable companion.

Saint Philip says:

Let us proceed, the sun is yet high; if we meet our comrades on the road, we will go in a body, and visit Mary.

Meeting the others, Saint Peter says:

Welcome Philip; welcome my Thomas.

Saint Thomas answers:

Well met, my comrades.

Saint Peter turns to his companions, and says:

Children, this appears to me the house of holiness; let jubilee, good cheer, and harmony, be with us.

Saint John says:

Flower of virtue, vase of knowledge, Philip, thou art welcome.

Saint Peter says:

Let us all proceed to Jerusalem, where we shall find the Mother of God.

They all depart, singing aloud:

Jesus, when we shall have seen this worthy goddess, our

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* *A un soldo è tornata la mia lira.* A *lira* is a coin worth twenty *soldi*: about tenpence, English money.

souls will be at peace; for we shall leave the Hebrew law. Thy zealous servants will brave death, and the most cruel torments, in thy honor. Oh, Jesus, grant our wish, and our souls will be at peace; for we shall leave the Hebrew law.

Being arrived in the presence of the Virgin Mary, and having paid their obedience, Saint Peter says:

He, Madonna, who lay in thy womb, salutes thee; and by his love maintains the harmony among us, which is so grateful to him. He likewise wishes thee to deliver us from a heavy affliction, by the holy mystery of his birth.

The Virgin Mary answers:

It is my duty to oblige thee. Welcome to thee and to all thy company. Let each speak freely, for to ask a boon of me is a trifle.

Saint Peter replies:

Now hear, Mother of the Omnipotent, the wish that labors in my bosom, and makes me sad; the wish that, above all things, I value. When thy Son ascended to heaven, he said he would depute to us the Holy Ghost. Thy intercession is the object of our demand. Not that we doubt his word; for, kind as he is, and supreme in power and mercy, he will not abandon his faulty servants, whom he has left on this earth.

Mary answers:

I will pray for you; dismiss your fears.

Saint Peter continues:

Alas, I recommend myself to thee.

Mary replies:

Thy wish shall be accomplished.

Saint John says:

Madonna, thou knowest we are deserted little orphans*: thou art our only resource; take pity on thy poor servants, for each is in the school of impatience. We are crazy, ignorant, and neglected. Thy prayers will fly to heaven: thou art our eternal guide; thy will governs heaven and earth.

Saint Bartholomew says:

Mary, thou art the pilot of this vessel: give us consolation; steer it into port, and guide us, each, with thy sweet propitious breath, to salvation.

Saint Matthew says:

Lighten this heavy burden, that we may take the straight path; and that the strayed wanderer may return with thy aid, O Virgin Mary!

Saint Simon says:

Oh thou, who, in despite of this humble dwelling, art the exalted Mother of our Lord, in whom the sweetest pity reigns, deign to assuage our grief!

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* *Orfanetti*, a diminutive of *orfani:* a flattering and kind expression.

Saint Philip says:

In charity, condescend to offer up thy all-potent prayers!

Saint James says:

Yield to our united entreaties, for I know God will not refuse thee.

The Magdalen says:

Pray, Mary, grant their request! Thou art their support, their treasure; as they have already told thee: fulfil their just and holy wish; remember they were the companions of thy Son, and stop the rivulet of their tears.

Saint Thomas says:

Mary, relieve the afflicted from their tribulation; thou seest that all apply to thee, invoking thy potent succor.

Mary replies:

I will not oppose your combined wish, for your voice is heard in heaven. To reward your holy obedience, I will, in my wisdom, address my Son.

She, kneeling, continues:

Son, if ever a wish of mine had weight with thee, let me obtain the request I now make. These, the companions of thy life, are in anxious expectation of seeing the Holy Ghost, as thou didst promise; deliver them from affliction. By the holy conception, which laid thee in my womb; by the divine Angel, Gabriel, who came to announce thy nativity; by the milk, which nourished thee; by my unremitting cares; by the countless steps made by the jack-ass, when thou fled'st, a humble lamb, from Herod; by the joy and anguish I have borne for thee, let me remind thee of thy loving Apostles, who are living in affliction, and conjure thee to speedily give them the wished-for satisfaction. Now, all join with me in prayer, and raise your eyes to heaven.

All the Apostles, kneeling, chant the following Hymn of praise, with the Virgin Mary:

Oh, Jesus, thou who hast been our conductor, here, in company with Mary, let our dolorous complaints cease. Listen to our fervent prayers, and grant relief to thy kneeling, and afflicted, servants. Oh, Jesus, show us grace; let our souls banquet on thy eternal holy light!

This Hymn being sung, the Holy Ghost descends from heaven, and the Virgin Mary, encircled with divine rays, says:

Now your wish is granted; be pleased to initiate yourselves in the divine revelation. Your just prayer has been heard, and Jesus will always bear you company.

Saint Peter says:

Thou wilt soon, Mary, be left alone; I will not abandon thee.

Mary replies:

Depart, with the benediction of God, and remember the passion of our Lord.

The Apostles depart, and the Boy, dressed as an Angel, takes leave, saying:

He, who would have a place in the celestial choir, must implore the mercy of Jesus Christ; the Holy Ghost will be sent to him, by my supreme Lord Jesus, who has suffered so much, on earth, to regain Paradise for us: he now dismisses you; always bear him in mind.

THE END.

In Siena, alla *Loggia* del Papa, 1616:

i. e. printed at the Office or Palace of the Pope.

REMARKS.

It is surely a subject of great moral and literary curiosity to afford authentic specimens of the progress of the stage; and to pretend to represent and make palpable to the vulgar, a miracle so impossible justly to conceive, as that of the *Descent of the Holy Ghost*, must denote a dangerous excess of rash ignorance in the people and the age. Yet, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, similiar exhibitions were the amusement of all ranks: they were the contrivances of monks, respected by the wealthy, and the delight of the people.

In the Pinelli library, which was sold by auction some years ago, were four volumes, No. 3576*, containing a collection of these holy mysteries; and from volume IV. of this collection the above piece is taken. The translation is as nearly literal as can be required: it is a faithful picture of the verbosity, insipidity, and irreverend manner, which pervade these pieces. The attempt at the politeness of urbanity, in this piece, is remarkable. It was chosen at a venture, for human patience scarcely could endure the fatigue of going through the volumes to discover either the worst or best. I have read enough to convince myself that the difference is not great: of the dull, the

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* The third and fourth volumes are in the possession of the editor: they contain 98 pieces, many of them duplicates, and are labelled by the Italian binder—*Antiche Rapprezentazione Sacre.* Their titles and extracts may hereafter be given in the Theatrical Recorder, as curiosities.

prophane, and the ludicrous, they are all composed. Some are founded on histories, in the Old and New Testaments; others on legendary tales of Saints; and many on the miracles.

Notwithstanding the absurdity, and even that which a more enlightened age might perhaps call blasphemy, of these pieces, while they show the simplicity of the people, they also afford sufficient proofs of the reverence, admiration, and zeal, with which they listened to the holy tale, thus represented. They could not admire the diction, eloquence, or wit of them, for they possessed none: in the subtle refinements of mind, such spectators could find no enjoyment: but the miracles, which they believed conduced to their salvation, were listened to with a rapture such as only could be felt by implicit faith. They believed what they heard, were astonished at the information they received, and felt all the raptures proper to credulity. Saint Jerome, with his lion in the wilderness, Saint Antony, his pig, and diabolical temptations, or Saint Paul, preaching before Felix, were to them equally true.

Such historical facts as these, respecting the change of ages and the progress of the human mind, truly interpreted, are awful: they should warn us that it is the propensity of the mind to hold opinions, which are common to the age in which men live; that, while they are only entertained as opinions, though absurd, they are innocent and ought to be respected; and, that persecution for opinion is the most dangerous of the mistakes of man.

THE FATHER OUTWITTED:

A SPANISH INTERLUDE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GUADARRAMA.

ISABELLA, his Daughter.

LEANDER, her Lover.

LORENZO, Servant to GUADARRAMA.

A NEIGHBOURING MERCHANT.

A Company of DANCERS and MUSICIANS.

SCENE—The Street before the House of GUADARRAMA.

THE FATHER OUTWITTED:

A SPANISH INTERLUDE.

Enter GUADARRAMA *from his House, with his Sword drawn, and dragging out* LORENZO.

Guadarrama.

COME along, rascal! Tell me the truth, infamous villain!

Lor. Famous! Famous yourself, Sir. Take care what you say. Don't call me famous!

Guad. Tell me directly, scoundrel, whom you took that letter to from my daughter?

Lor. Took it to! Why I took it to—— Now listen—I took it to—— You have a confounded deal of curiosity.

Guad. Have you a mind to be strangled, dog? (*collars him.*)

Lor. No, truly—Take care what you do—Hold a little—— My young mistress gave me the letter—mind—she gave it to me—and I took it.

Guad. Who the devil doubts that! But where?

Lor. She said to me, says she, Lorenzo, says she, there—there's a rial for thee; and do thou take that letter thou knowest where.

Guad. Oh, ho! What, she paid you beforehand then: and you, like a good-for-nothing knave, are plotting with my daughter to dishonor me.

Lor. Do you think so? Lord, Sir, we can't dishonor you.

Guad. How so?

Lor. Because, Sir, you have no honor.

Guad. You impudent dog! Have you a mind to have my sword up your back-bone?

Lor. Who, me! Mercy forbid! Oh lord, Sir! I'll tell you all, if you will but hide that horrible spit!

Guad. Indeed but I will not.—Come, Sir; come to the point!

Lor. Well, well, Sir! Well—Pray, Sir—do you know—your brother——

Guad. There's a pretty question!—To be sure I do, booby.

Lor. Oh, well—But the—the letter was not for him.—Pray, Sir—do you know——

Guad. Do I know the devil! I want to know nobody but my daughter's gallant.

Lor. Tch, tch—Lord, Sir—why didn't you say so at first. I should then have told you very frankly that I know—I know—that is to say—I know nothing of him.

Guad. You don't, hound! Stop, stop a little—I'll warrant me I have a secret will make you find the use of your tongue. (*beats him.*)

Lor. Oh, lord!—Oh, lord! Oh, lord!—Murder!—Fire!—Help, help!—Oh, my wicked master! He has killed me—he has knocked out my brains! Oh, oh!——

Enter the MERCHANT.

Merch. Hey-day!—What is the matter here, Signior Guadarrama? What's all this noise in the street about? This is behaviour that people would little expect from you, Sir!

Guad. Why, what would you have me do, neighbour?—I have a thief in my house, a soundrel to whom I give my bread, and——

Lor. There, Sir;—you hear—you hear his accusation—Wonderful! He gives me bread, and I eat it!

Guad. Yes, traitor! But I don't give it you to carry love-letters between my daughter and her gallant.

Lor. Oh, fie, Sir!—What are you going to tell the gentleman?

Guad. Why, sirrah, is it not truth?

Lor. Sir! Sir! If there be a wicked man in the whole world, it is my master—There has he kept me tied up like a dog to a manger all last night, because I would not carry a billet-doux from him to a certain very honest virtuous woman, who is one of his best friends too: and now he has the impudence, I mean imprudence, to say it was a love-letter from his daughter.—(*aside, to the* Merchant) The old lying libertine!

Merch. Why, truly, if that be the fact, I think the lad is in the right. Is it proper for a person of your years to employ youth upon such errands?

Guad. So! so! so!—Here's another!—And so you give more credit to the impertinences of that booby, than to me! Me, whom you have known so many years, and have seen discharging the duties of so many honorable employments?

Lor. (*to the* Merchant) Oh, yes! honorable employments!—To be sure he was four years hangman at Saragossa!

Guad. See, see!—Is it possible for human impudence to surpass this!—Let me get at him—let me get at him—I'll murder him!

Merch. Moderate your anger, Signior Guadarrama—I believe

you; and would advise you to turn this whimsical fellow away: for, by what I can perceive of you both, it is not likely you should agree together.

Guad. With all my heart; the sooner the better! And I hope I shall never see his face again, for I have not had a moment's quiet since he has been with me.

Lor. Oh! I'll go as soon as he pleases: but, pray, desire him to pay me what I owe him first.

Guad. Why, booby! jack-ass! num-scull! If you owe me, how can I have any thing to pay you? Get along about your business, hound! and never enter my house again.

Lor. Why, what should I do in your house? (*mutters*) An old drunken hobgoblin! Would you have me starved, till I am as dry, as shrivelled, and as ugly as yourself?

Guad. This is too much! I'll teach you, Sir——

[*Exit* Lorenzo.

Merch. He is fled.—Never mind him; he is beneath your notice: all that he wants is to put you in a passion.

Guad. Heaven be praised for my deliverance!—I assure you, Sir, he is one of the wickedest dogs in the universe. There never was such another lazy, awkward, insolent, cheating, gormandizing, stupid beast; with every vice, and without one good quality!—But let us talk of something else. My daughter gives me a great deal of uneasiness: she has fallen in love with somebody; who he is I don't know; and I have discovered that she writes to him. Her extreme youth may occasion her to commit some folly that would be the death of me. You are a wise man; what would you advise me to do?

Merch. Humph!—If I were in your place, I would always carry the key of my house in my pocket: then nobody could come to see my daughter, unless I were present; and if she went out, I would always go along with her.

Guad. Very true—very true!—Thank you, my good friend. I will take your advice: we shall see, then, who will overreach me. Let me beg of you to do me another favor. Do you yourself read my daughter a lecture upon her imprudence: she does not want delicacy; and I don't doubt but she will blush at her fault when she finds that the whole neighbourhood knows it.

Merch. If you think that it will be of any use, I'll do it with all my heart. I must come, however, by and by; for at present I have some business to transact that I must not neglect. Permit me therefore to take my leave.

Guad. My very good friend, I wish you a good day. (*Exit* Merchant)—Oh! what an intolerable burden is it for a man who is a widower to have an unmarried handsome daughter upon his hands! Your house is haunted by every idle young fellow in the parish. But I shall be a match for them; they may stand and kick their heels in the street till they cough themselves

into consumptions, if they please, before they shall find an opportunity of whispering the least word to Isabella! No, no; I defy them!

Enter LEANDER; *with him* LORENZO, *dressed like a Woman, and covered with a large Veil: they speak together at the Top of the Stage.*

Lean. Yonder is your master, Lorenzo! Hide your face well! and, when you are in the house, remember to tell my dear Isabella every word I have repeated to you.

Lor. Yes; and so I suppose her father will either break my neck, or kill me by starving me.

Lean. Never fear; we shall soon come to your assistance: only take care to play your part well.—Signior Guadarrama, I hope I have the happiness to see you in good health.

Guad. Ah, Signior Leander! Good-morrow; good-morrow! What has brought you to this part of the town so soon in the morning?

Lean. Something which I believe will claim your attention as much as mine. I know you to be a worthy good-natured man, and I dare say you will not refuse me the favor I am going to ask of you. This lady happened just now to be conversing in the street with one of her relations: her husband, who unfortunately did not know the gentleman was related to him, imagined him to be his wife's gallant, and on that supposition fell into a terrible passion; ay, and if it had not been for me, would certainly have killed her. Let me beg of you, then, Sir, to receive her into your house for a short time, till several well disposed people, and the relation himself, can convince her husband of the unjustness of his suspicions.

Guad. Indeed, Signior Leander, I don't know what to say to this. I should be glad to oblige you by protecting the lady; but I should be sorry to have it reported that my house is become the asylum of imprudent people.

Lean. Oh, Sir, you may assure yourself I would not interest myself in the behalf of such people; much less entreat you to receive them into a house so respectable as yours. This lady is a miracle of virtue and prudence. Her husband, in the first transport of passion, has used her ill; but, when he shall know the truth, he will acknowledge himself infinitely obliged to you; and you will obtain the character, through the whole city, of the Protector of the Unfortunate.

Guad. Well, Sir, if that be the case, pray leave the lady; and, I assure you, I shall be happy to do her every service in my power.

Lean. I don't doubt it, Sir. I expected nothing less from your known benevolence.

Lor. (*aside to* Leander) Sir! Sir! Either make haste and

finish your dialogue, or let me have a share in it; for I am devilishly tired of holding my tongue. Pray, Sir, have you a mind that I should discover my charms, and——

Lean. Stop your noise, you confounded booby!

Lor. Have a care; don't tell him my name: if you once mention Lorenzo, we are undone; and I know you lovers are so absent, and so imprudent——

Lean. The devil take your tongue! Don't tell him yourself, and I'll warrant I sha'n't.—(*aloud*) I commit you, dear Madam, to the protection of this worthy gentleman; and so I hope I shall soon return with good success. [*Exit* Leander.

Guad. Permit me, Madam, the honor of your hand, to conduct you into my house; where I hope you will consider yourself the mistress, and dispose of it as you please.

Lor. (*counterfeiting a woman's voice*) Me, Sir! Oh, no, Sir! Not for the world, Sir! Only give me plenty of victuals and drink; for, to be sure, I must confess I do find I have a most dangerous gnawing at my stomach!

Guad. (*aside*) This is a strange beginning for a fine lady! ——I hope, Madam, we shall find means to satisfy your hunger.

Lor. I am not unreasonable; only give me for breakfast a dozen of well-fed pigeons, an omelet, a large loaf, and four bottles of your best wine, and I shall be satisfied.

Guad. Four bottles of wine!

Lor. Four bottles—I would not touch a drop more: I am delicate in my drinking, and have a mortal aversion to drunkenness.

Guad. Well, Well; walk in, if you please.—Four bottles of wine! (*aside*) [Guadarrama *bows to* Lorenzo, *and presents his hand, which* Lorenzo *returns with a kick*]—What is the meaning of all this, Madam! Have I been guilty of any rudeness to you that you should kick me?

Lor. Impertinent fellow! What did you mean by squeezing my hand! I would have you to know, Sir, I am a person of extreme delicacy; and, plague take me, if you squeeze my hand again, but I'll——

Guad. Nay, pray, Madam, let me beg of you not to put yourself in a passion. (Guadarrama *knocks at the door*)—Isabella! Isabella! Come here, child. I want to speak with you.

Enter Isabella.

Isab. What did you want, Sir?

Guad. Take great care of this lady. Keep her company; and see that she wants for nothing: she is a person of distinction.

Isab. I shall be sure to obey you, Sir.

[*Exeunt* Isabella *and* Lorenzo.

Guad. Oh! love, love!—How mighty is thy power!—I did but touch the hand of that lady, and I feel myself transported! My imagination tells me she is as beautiful as an angel! Her brilliant eyes—her rosy cheeks—her——Hey-day! I am turning foolish.—Well, and after this, now, should I be surprised that my daughter, in the spring-time of life, should indulge the tender passions; when I, though the snow of winter lies upon my head, cannot resist their influence!

Enter LEANDER.

Lean. I am come, Signior Guadarrama, to return you thanks for your kindness, and to re-conduct the lady to her husband; who is now satisfied of her innocence, and no longer angry.

Guad. She is a charming creature! I am in love with her myself, even in this short space.—Isabella! (*he knocks at the door.*)

Isab. (*within*) Sir!

Guad. Desire the lady to walk down, and be happy. Her husband is reconciled.

Isab. She is coming in a moment, Sir.

Enter ISABELLA, *disguised in the long Mantle and Veil of* LORENZO.

Guad. There, Sir, conduct the lady home: and I flatter myself she will have no cause to complain of the treatment she received at my house.

Isab. (*aside to* Leander) For Heaven's sake, make haste! I am terrified to death.

Lean. Farewell, Sir. And believe me I am exceedingly obliged to you. [*Exeunt* Isabella *and* Leander.

Guad. Now will I go in and give my daughter some good advice. I will convince her, by this lady's example, how circumspect women ought to be in their most trifling actions.—Though, on consideration, the morning is fine, and there is nobody walking this way. I had better call her down; and so we may both enjoy the fresh air, and the beauty of the day.—Isabella!

Lor. (*at the window, in his own dress*) My dear darling of a papa, what do you want?

Guad. Oh, Heaven! what do I see?

Lor. Oh, papa! Your hard-heartedness, and eternal harangues, have made this great ugly beard grow, at which you seem so much astonished. And if you continue your maundering, I shall shortly have the whiskers of a Turkish janizary.

Guad. By what enchantment, wretch! did you get into my house?

Lor. Enchantment! There is no enchantment in the case. You put me here yourself.

Guad. Where is my daughter?

Lor. With her husband; who received her at your own hands.

Guad. Miserable old man!—Rascal! I'll have you hanged.

Enter LEANDER *and* ISABELLA, *with Musicians and Dancers.*

FIRST MUSICIAN.

Happy father, sleep in peace;
Love thy daughter's fate secures:
Hymen and Love thy cares decrease,
The cares suspicion still endures.
Happy father, sleep in peace,
Thy joys will have a large increase!

SECOND MUSICIAN.

Happy father, sleep in peace;
Love and Hymen now combine
To give our joys a large increase,
And cherish life's decline:
The little prattlers soon thou'lt see,
Sweet pictures of thy former days,
Come clinging round thy aged knee,
To chant their infant lays.
Happy father, sleep in peace,
Thy joys will have a large increase!

Guad. What, gentlemen! do you come to deride me because my daughter has been stolen away from me?

Isab. Let me beg of you, gentlemen, to have done.——No, my dear father! they do not mean to deride you. Behold me at your feet; excuse, forgive my fault. Never will I rise from the ground till I am restored to that tenderness of which you have hitherto given me so many proofs.

Lean. I knew, Sir, it was not your intention to marry your daughter; I therefore durst not demand her of you. We loved each other; we have been married these eight days: the thing now is past remedy. You are acquainted with my birth and fortune; let not your forgiveness be wanting to make our happiness complete. I will exert every duty and attention to efface from your memory the error that love has caused me to commit.

Guad. Come to my arms, my dear children! I cannot be angry with you. I approve your union.—Come, let us be merry; let us think of nothing but joy!

A DANCE.

(LORENZO *sings at the Window.*)

In vain old men may snarl and watch,
And barricade the house;
For love as sure the girls will catch,
As cat will catch a mouse.

THE END.

REMARKS.

THE foregoing Interlude was translated, in 1784, not from the Spanish, as far as the translator recollects, but from a French version; therefore, how far the work of Lope de Vega may equal, or may exceed, the broad humor of the above version, or may authorize the expressions there used, can only be known by comparing it with the original, which the editor has not in his possession.

Though short, this piece has the true characteristic of the old Spanish drama: it abounds in incidents, and indeed appears to have been the original of one incident, Isabella getting free, which has since been repeated by Molière, in *L'Ecole des Maris;* by Wycherly, his translator, in the Country Wife; and lately by Mr. Sheridan, in the Duenna. If Lope de Vega could write comedies equal to this, in its quick succession of incidents, and with the rapidity attributed to him, his genius was indeed extraordinary: but, according to a brief examination of his pieces, by M. Linguet, it should appear that the genius of Lope de Vega was greatly inferior to that of Calderon de la Barca. Neither of these poets are sufficiently known to the literati of Europe; and inquiries, concerning them, deserve to be made.

DRAMATIC BIOGRAPHY.

LOPE DE VEGA.

THE following account of this very remarkable poet is taken from a work entitled Letters from an English Traveller in Spain*, which, as we are informed in the Monthly Review, were written by Mr. Dillon.

It is here given, because it contains a more circumstantial account than any which is in the possession of the editor.

"Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, born the 25th November, 1562, was the son of Felix Vega de Carpio, a gentleman of Madrid, who had the reputation of being a very good poet; a turn which he observed with rapture in his child from its infancy, and which the fond parent cherished with the greatest delight. At five years of age young Lope could read Spanish and Latin fluently, and even make verses, which he exchanged with his school-fellows for pictures and other trifles. His father, charmed with this surprising dawn of genius, spared no pains to cultivate a darling plant that seemed to encourage the most flattering expectations. At the age of twelve, Lope was master of the Latin tongue and the art of rhetoric; could dance and fence with ease and dexterity, and sing with a tolerable taste. Endowed with these accomplishments, he became an orphan, at his first entrance into the world, with every pressure of distress, and was taken into the service of the Bishop of Avila, in whose praise he wrote several pastorals, and made his first dramatic essay, with a comedy entitled *La Pastoral de Jacinto*. He soon after quitted his patron, went to the university of Alcala, where he studied philosophy, and took a degree; then returned to Madrid, and became secretary to the Duke of Alva, who intrusted him with his most weighty concerns. Encouraged by his new Mecenas, he again tuned his lyre, and sung his praise in a poem entitled *Arcadia*. About this time he

* London, 1781.

married Donna Isabella de Urbina, a lady of fashion, on account of whose gallantries he soon after fought a duel, and having grievously wounded his antagonist, fled to Valencia, where he lived some years; after which he returned again to Madrid, where, losing his wife, he felt himself animated with a military ardor, and repaired to Cadiz to embark on board the great armada, fitting out by Philip the Second, against Queen Elizabeth. In this fleet he sailed for Lisbon in company with his brother, a lieutenant in the Spanish navy, who lost his life in that expedition. Our poet had his share of the misfortunes of that disappointed fleet, and appeared at Madrid without a single friend, became secretary to the Marquis of Malpica, and afterward to the Count of Lemos. Though his first marriage was so unsuccessful, he was in hopes of being more fortunate in that state with Donna Juana de Guardia, a lady of rank whom he soon after lost. Inconsolable at these repeated afflictions, he entered into the ecclesiastic state, was ordained a priest, and appointed head chaplain to a congregation of priests at Madrid, though he still courted the muses, making this the chief relaxation that softened his sorrows. He was now in the zenith of his poetic glory, and his reputation became so universal, that Pope Urban the Eighth sent him the degree of doctor in divinity, and the cross of the order of Malta, added to a lucrative post in the apostolic exchequer, which Lope held to his death, which happened in his seventy-third year, to the great regret of the court and every learned man in the kingdom. The Duke of Sesa, who was his patron and executor, caused him to be interred, at his own expence, with such pomp and magnificence as had never been seen before for a private person: the duke invited all the grandees of the kingdom, who attended in person, in token of their concern at the loss of so distinguished a character. The funeral obsequies lasted three days; all the clergy of the king's chapel assisted, three bishops officiated pontifically, and three of the most eloquent orators exerted themselves in praise of the deceased, adding new laurels to the fame of Lope de Vega, with whom, when living, many princes gloried in being acquainted.

Pope Urban wrote him a letter in answer to a dedication of his poem in favour of Mary Queen of Scots, entitled *Corona tragica de Maria Stuardo.* Cardinal Barbarini held a very intimate correspondence with him, as did many other cardinals and noblemen, who courted his friendship. When he walked in the streets, he was gazed upon and followed as a prodigy; he was, moreover, loaded with presents; and by the rapid sale of his numerous works soon amassed a considerable fortune, and acquired a capital of 150,000 ducats, beside his annual income of fifteen hundred ducats, arising out of his benefices and employments. So great was the fertility of his genius, the amazing readiness of his wit, and rapidity of thought, added to his animated expression, that perhaps there never was a poet in the world, either ancient or modern, that could be compared to him. His lyric compositions and fugitive pieces, with his prose essays, form a collection of fifty volumes, beside his dramatic works, which make twenty-six volumes more; exclusive of four hundred scriptural dramatic pieces, called in Spain *Autos Sacramentales,* all which were successively brought on the stage; and, what is still more extraordinary, speaking of his printed works, in one of his pastorals to *Claudio,* he says, they form the least part of what still remained in his closet. It appears, from his own authority, that he used constantly to write five sheets a day, which, multiplied by the days of his life, would make 133,225 sheets; then, reckoning the number of verses corresponding to each sheet, it will appear that, exclusive of prose, he wrote 21,316,000 verses; an unheard-of exertion and facility of versification! our author possessing an inexhaustible fund, which, like the fire of Vesuvius, continually afforded new matter, and blazed out incessantly. So extraordinary was the rapidity of his genius, he would often finish a play in twenty-four hours, and some comedies in less than five hours, with as much correctness and elegance in his verse as the most laboured pieces of other writers of his time. Such was the contemporary of Sir Philip Sidney, Shakspeare, and Spenser. In his *Laurel de Apollo* he has celebrated all the good

poets of his time; but none were more universally praised from all parts than himself. His surprising faculties were such, that in his dramatic pieces he broke through all rules of art; yet such was his success, that he was constantly the favorite of the public, and drew perpetual bursts of applause. It was not his fault if his successors had not his talents to conceal their defects, and only imitated his imperfections, rendering the Spanish drama insupportable when deprived of the beauties of Lope: this was foreseen by Cervantes, who reproaches our poet with destroying the rules of the drama, as laid down by the ancients, in order to court popular applause; to obtain which he lost sight of every idea of nature, or good taste; adding, that the probability of fable dwindled in his hands, and was wafted away by the enchanting magic of verse; all unity of time and place was annihilated; his heroes came out of their cradles, and wandered from east or west as lovers or combatants, put on the cowl of monks, died in cloisters, and worked miracles on the stage. The scene is transported from Italy to Flanders, and as easily shifted from Valencia to Mexico. Footmen discourse like courtiers, princes like bullies, and ladies like chambermaids. The actors appear in legions, often seventy at a time, and close with numerous processions.

"So sensible was Lope of the wildness of his imagination, and how wantonly he sported with the confidence of the public, that speaking of himself, he acknowledges his fault in the following words:

'Mas ninguno de todos llamar puedo
Mas barbaro que yo, pues contra el arte
Me atrevo a dar preceptos, y me dexo
Llevar de la vulgar corriente, a donde
Me llaman ignorante, Italia y Francia.'

"And again,

'Y escrivo por el arte, que inventaron
Los que el vulgar aplauso pretendieron
Porque como los paga el vulgo, es justo
Hablarle en necio, para darle gusto.'

"That is, 'that he was sensible of the reproaches Italy and France would make him for breaking through all rules to please the ignorant public; but, since it was they that paid for it, they had a right to be pleased in their own way.'"

The above is the account given by Mr. Dillon, which entirely corresponds with the stories we meet with in other authors; but which can never be made to agree with probability. Deducting from his life the years that were dedicated indispensably to other avocations, the time that was necessarily spent in the acquirements of such a person, as well as in eating, drinking, and sleeping; unless it can be proved he neither eat, drank, nor slept, that he stood in no need of acquirements, and that he was born a perfect poet; calculation will make it appear that he could not have *copied* all which he is said to have *written;* the mechanical labor would have been too great, without attributing the loss of a moment to the labors of invention.

To conceive a comedy in twenty-four hours is very possible; but I never met with the writer who could transcribe one in the time: yet, we are told, that, Lope de Vega would finish some comedies in less than five hours, with as much correctness and elegance in his verse as the most labored pieces of other writers of his time.

His prose writings are said to have been very voluminous; and that, in poetry, he was so prolific, according to his own authority, as to have written 21,316,000 verses by fair calculation.

To copy two lines of poetry in a minute, for nine hours every day of a man's life, is a labor which, it is presumed, the human frame could never perform: yet, exclusive of his prose, had Lope de Vega, for the space of fifty years, without a day's intermission, worked nine hours a day, and copied two lines a minute, it would only amount to 19,70,000 verses.

That, like Calderon de la Barca, he was extremely prolific there are too many concurring testimonies to be doubted: but, if the works of both these poets did not remain in such great

abundance, the truth itself would be rendered dubious by the exaggerated tales that are told of them.

In some future numbers of the Theatrical Recorder, other and more accurate specimens from the works of Lope de Vega are intended to be given.

NEW PIECE

FIRST PERFORMED IN MAY, 1805.

YOUTH, LOVE, AND FOLLY:

A COMIC OPERA, IN TWO ACTS.

THIS Piece having first appeared for the benefit of Mr. Kelly, when it was received with applause, and afterward performed for several nights, will, it is said, be again brought forward next season. It is an opera of two acts, with pleasing parts, written by Mr. Diamond, the author of the Hero of the North, from whom we are led to hope for compositions of a superior kind.

Except trifles for benefits, nothing further new has appeared at either of the winter theatres.

On Monday, June 8th, the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket opened, and on the 18th a Mr. Winston made his first appearance in the character of Caleb Quotem, in the Entertainment called The Review. The following account of him is copied from the Morning Chronicle, June 19th; and also of Mr. Liston, Miss Davies, and Miss Tyrer.

"His figure is well adapted to parts of this kind, and he was very properly dressed. Nevertheless, the *Windsor Jack of all Trades* did not excite quite so much merriment as has been his custom to do on such occasions. Mr. Winston does not possess that enunciation at once rapid and distinct, and those ludicrous looks and gestures which are necessary to give full effect to *Caleb's* account of his occupations, and his conceit and self-importance. Several times he showed considerable powers of

humor, and met with great applause. With a little practice he may shine in this department; and we make no doubt but his talents will be found very useful. The part of *John Lump* was supported by Mr. Liston, who is one of the best Yorkshiremen we ever saw upon the stage. His performance was a most perfect imitation of the clownishness and cunning of the original. *Partridge* would have bestowed no praise upon him, imagining that he beheld real nature. Mrs. Harlowe was to have played *Phœbe Whitethorn*, but Mr. Elliston announced, in a neat apology, that she was obliged to appear in the farce at Drury Lane; and that Miss Davies, of Covent Garden Theatre, had undertaken, at a short notice, to supply her place. The audience acquiesced cheerfully in this arrangement, and with great reason, for Miss Davies looked charmingly in the volunteer's dress, sung the airs like a syren, and displayed throughout great modesty, simplicity, and archness. Miss Tyrer was much applauded in the *Gipsy;* and the piece altogether went off with the utmost *eclat*. The house was pretty well filled."

THE ART OF ACTING.

(*Continued from No.* VI. *p.* 422.)

CHAP. V.

The Character of HAMLET.

TO the imagination, the character of the hero is that which so greatly excels every other as to approach ideal perfection. The actor, however, must not imagine that this ideal perfection implies any the least want of feeling, but the contrary. All the fine susceptibilities, all the quick conceptions, whatever denotes mental rapidity and power, are most visible in the hero.

There are other characters, in which the great qualities of the hero are seen; but their lustre is occasionally obscured by the strong passions that possess the bosom, and labor to be gratified.

These characters are so various that they require every effort of human genius to thoroughly conceive and pourtray them, so as to make them distinct, and individual. When the author has happily ended his task, his purposes are all defeated by deficiency in stage representation.

This remark is more applicable to the tragedies of Shakspeare than to those of any other author, perhaps, that ever wrote. To represent Hamlet, for example, some of the actors, who have the least to say, ought to be inspired with as fine a conception of the effects, intended to be produced, as the performer who personates Hamlet, or the Ghost. On them the illusion of the scene, on some occasions, depends, more than on the principal characters; yet experience continually evinces that these actors are incapable of such conceptions, or that they neglect their duty in a very culpable degree.

I propose to offer the character of *Hamlet* to the consideration of actors as at the head of a class, and forming an example to which they may refer, whenever they intend to pourtray the strong, the impetuous, yet the generous passions of youth, combined with the heroic qualities, and the perfect gentleman.

The quality which distinguishes Hamlet from all other characters, and, in that respect, as one that is superior in conception and execution to every other known to poetry, is genius.

This quality appears to be incapable of being accurately defined, for it is unlimited: it does or may include every possible mental power. It supposes exquisite sensibility, a judgment scarcely liable to err, and boundless comprehension.

In Hamlet, these rare gifts are adorned by correctness of thought, speech, and behaviour. Whenever he deviates from this correctness, it is because he is under the strong impulse of the reigning passion, by which he is devoured: but his deviations are all marked, either by the rectitude of his heart, which overflows, or the flights of that genius which passion agitates and expands.

He never can be either rude or unfeeling, where he owes respect; except when under emotions, which, in their nature

and cause, are become irresistible; and even then, if there be a shade of rudeness, it is qualified as I have described.

It is in the rapidity, contrast, and force, of his transitions that he is most frequently characterized. It is scarcely too bold a metaphor to say, his thoughts flash like lightning. If the eye, the action, and the attitude, of the performer have not at once the suddenness and the gracefulness of his astonishing genius, *Hamlet is no longer before us.*

If the memory fail but for a moment, if the associations, or ideas, which the words are intended to convey, do not precede these words, if they are not marked by a sudden change of look, and demeanor, or if, in either associations or words, the memory be at any loss, again *Hamlet is no longer before us.*

If, when warding off the satellites, by whom in his perturbed state of mind he is tormented, the playfulness which his good-breeding and kindness of heart suggest be mistaken, if words which are capable of two meanings be cynically delivered, and the worst meaning enforced, instead of half concealed, one essential quality of Hamlet, his sensibility, is totally forgotten: *it is not Hamlet.*

But it is in the utterance, the coloring, and the display, of the passion which tortures his mind, and in picturing all the forms and tints to which this passion gives birth, and which are almost endless, that the difficulty of personating Hamlet chiefly consists. If any of the minor parts be neglected, it is no longer Hamlet that the spectator beholds: but, if the grand essential of exquisite sensibility do not pervade the whole frame, and burst from the actor in all its tortuous appearances, he then indeed becomes despised, or pitied, by that part of the audience who understand, and therefore almost adore, the character.

The youth of Hamlet, and his extraordinary powers of mind, are qualities so seldom united that, had we not proofs of their possible coexistence, we might even be tempted to suppose that the immortal Shakspeare, deliciously true as he was to Nature, had here transgressed her boundaries. But there

are sufficient examples on record, and among them are Cowley and Congreve, of the force of early genius.

However, the man, who deeply considers Hamlet, as pourtrayed by Shakspeare, must perceive that nothing less than some such tragical accident as that in which the vehemence of his early emotions took birth, could or can give to youth a true knowledge of the working of his passions. For the mind to have any knowledge of the associations, which are given to Hamlet in such infinite abundance, it is necessary that it should have been experienced: first, that it should have been influenced, itself, by passions; next, that it should have been schooled, and trained, to all the various knowledge which Hamlet possesses; and, again, that it should not be ignorant even of the vices, much less of the virtues, that are practised in the world.

If this reasoning be accurate, it follows, that, a youth, though a youth of almost miraculous genius, unless he should have been placed under the extraordinary circumstances of Hamlet, can never be his just representative.

The inference is clear, nor do I wish it to be disguised, that the folly of those, who prompted Master Betty to appear in the character of Hamlet, could only be equalled by the mania of the spectators, who could not only applaud and encourage him, in this absurd attempt, but ridiculously and ignorantly assert, as many of them did, that he was equal, nay superior, to Garrick.

The only fit representative of Hamlet is the man of middle age; whose form, at a distance, may appear youthful; whose mind is penetrating, and stored with ideas; whose feelings are at his command; who is in no danger of being betrayed by his memory; and whose powers of exciting the passions are of the highest order.

(*To be continued.*)

ESSAY ON DRAMATIC COMPOSITION.

(*Continued from No.* VI. *p.* 426.)

To well understand the dramatic evils that arise from attempts to preserve the pretended unities of time and place, we must consider the foundation, nature, and structure of dramatic composition.

The foundation of it consists in the passions and desires of the human species; the materials for construction are the events to which that species is liable; and the nature of those events or materials must be singular, such as but rarely happen, and must therefore be select.

Singular and rare events do not occur, in succession, at the same time, or in the same place. If it happen, in nature, that two or three singular incidents follow each other, they may be of a kind to form as many scenes, but not a complete drama. It may be possible to compose pieces of one act, from such events, but not pieces of five acts. For this reason, perhaps, it is that the French theatre abounds in comedies of one act: but it seldom happens that those comedies are, in their incidents and action, correctly probable; they more frequently deviate into absurd or impossible suppositions.

In all the fine arts, it is allowed that the first grand requisite, in good composition, is select nature. When a landscape painter, of genius, chooses a scene, which nature presents, he omits whatever he perceives would injure the prospect, if inserted; and the great perfection of his art is to imagine objects which, if inserted, would give a higher value to the whole. To select, to omit, and to add, are the chief rules of composition, through the whole circle of the fine arts.

To preserve the unity of place, it is in general necessary to suppose the scene either a street or a hall, common to comers and goers. Can a sick person be brought into a street, or a hall, with probability? Yet many incidents, both serious

and comic, worthy of the pencil of the poet, pass in the apartments of the sick.

Can public offices, the Bank, the Stock Exchange, and innumerable others, be represented either in a street or in a hall? Yet, what places more productive of comic effect?

Were the scene, through five acts, laid in the Bank, the Stock Exchange, or any such place, the remaining incidents, necessary to the drama, could not with probability pass there.

Gaming-houses, places of ill fame, or of public resort, with numberless others, might be instanced, in which the poet may find many of the richest materials for composition: yet all these, to whoever attempts to preserve the unities of time and place, must be excluded. The injury done by these pretended rules is incalculable!

That story alone is well told in which all the incidents, that appertain to it, are seen in *full action*; as they are supposed to have passed. The contrary mode has prevailed, till insipidity had gained almost entire possession of the stage. It has been the mode to narrate, and by narration to prepare people for some one principal incident, which formed the denouement. This artifice has become such common-place that every person, much accustomed to the drama, can divine, perhaps in the first scene, sometimes even in the first speech, and certainly in the first act, the whole secret of the poet, and predict the catastrophe. Suspense, that medium of delight to an audience, has been destroyed; or rather never created; and the audience are obliged to sit, wearied and yawning, during two hours and a half; when they came hoping to enjoy one of the highest of intellectual pleasures.

Those, who appear to have been most strenuous for the preservation of the unities, have been the persons who have least understood in what real unity consists. The unity of a story is best preserved by exhibiting it in all its gradations. If in nature the principal events of the life of an enterprising man were so connected as to form a whole, the life of that man might with the utmost probability be represented on the stage.

But the fact is, that each of these principal adventures are in nature distinct, and are each combined with minor incidents, such as particularly belong to their principal.

Hence it follows, that one principal event, generally speaking, should be chosen as a subject for dramatic composition; but all the minor incidents which relate to that event should be most carefully displayed to give it at once force and relief.

If any other remarkable event, in the history of such a man, no matter at what distance of time it may have happened, be so connected with the particular event, which the poet may select, as that it must either be told or represented, representation, perhaps, ought in all cases to be preferred. Thus, taking the murder of Duncan as the principal event on which the tragedy of Macbeth is founded, the scenery of the blasted heath, and appearance of the wierd sisters, are previous events; but had they been narrated, instead of represented, how would the divine fervor of the poet have been destroyed!

If a poet should intend to exhibit a husband, who, after a long absence, should return and be tortured by fears concerning his family, or the conduct of his wife, his fears and his whole conduct might acquire infinitely greater force and rationality by representing the events, or incidents, that first induced him to quit them: that is, by a total disregard of time and place, the story might acquire peculiar force and beauty.

The difficulty the poet has to encounter is, that of its being necessary for him to make the audience perfectly acquainted with these events, and not suffering them to commit any mistake, or be under any confusion. Of this kind is the story of Posthumus and Imogen, in the play of Cymbeline.

These are facts which have not hitherto been treated with that cool and unprejudiced discussion which is at all times necessary for inquiry. Indeed, they have scarcely been touched upon, except by poets, and critics, who were under the persuasion that the strict observance of the unities was absolutely necessary to dramatic perfection.

Why should it be taken for granted, that, because many of the original great masters in the dramatic art have written ac-

cording to plans which suited the age and people to whom they wrote, those plans ought to be rigidly followed? How can it be proved that they are suited to *all ages* and *all people*?

These are questions which scarcely demand exemplification. The associations of mind agree with the circumstances under which they are received; and a Christian cannot have those associations concerning the gods of the Greeks, or the adventures of their fabulous heroes, which were common to the Athenians. The rites, the ceremonies, the chorus, and the tale, which may all have inspired the most grand and rapturous ideas, when developed by Sophocles, so as to agree with the opinions which prevailed among the people to whom he wrote, may yet appear dull, uninteresting, or absurd, to a modern audience. The unity of action is that alone which is indispensable to the dramatic poet: the tendency of the other unities is but to distract the mind from every comprehensive plan, and to torture it by the discovery of the means to escape difficulties which itself has created, which are out of the course of human events, therefore unnatural, and which actually engender the improbabilities they pretend to correct. While they continue to be thought essential, grandeur of design can scarcely enter the mind of the poet; and certainly can never agree with the observance of those unities.

(To be continued.)

SOME ACCOUNT

OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE GERMAN STAGE.

(*Continued from No.* V. *p.* 357.)

IN the year 1773, the German stage was enriched by the introduction of the grand serious opera, with which it was before unacquainted. *Alceste* was the first that appeared; and the work is still regarded as a masterpiece, both in poetry and in music. Wieland, a distinguished name among the authors of Germany, and honored by the Duke of Weimar, who made

him a counsellor, was the poet. Schweizer wrote the music, and was a worthy coadjutor with Wieland. The success of this opera was prodigious; nor was applause solely confined to the piece, for, exclusive of its own merits, the performers in it were all of distinguished talents. The part of Parthenia especially gave pleasure, as acted by Madam Hellmuth, a German actress, who among the Italians themselves rarely had a superior. She afterward left the theatre to sing at the chapel of Mentz. In that year a drama appeared, which was not only original, but unique. This was *Goetz von Berlichingen*, written by Goethe, privy counsellor to the Duke of Weimar, and well known as the author of the Sorrows of Werter. This drama was something like the life of a man put into dialogue. The subject is taken from the history of the age of chivalry, when the German nobles presided in their fortified castles, and, proud of their little domain, were by turns the tyrants or the avengers of oppressed innocence, without paying the least regard to the laws. *Goetz* was one of these knights, as may be seen in the history which he himself has published. It is with a daring hand that Goethe has traced his character, adventures, and the spirit of the age in which he lived, without subjecting himself to the rules of Aristotle, or the unities of action, time, and place. These irregularities, however, are compensated for by numberless beauties and passages truly sublime. The energetic picture of the age of Goetz, and the contrast of characters, particularly of females, all traced in a masterly manner, leave nothing more to be desired*. Though this piece does not seem to have been intended for representation, yet the difficulties that appeared to obstruct its passage to the stage, as well those of scenery as of the great number of actors it requires, have all been vanquished, and it has successively appeared at Berlin, Hamburg, and Leipsic.

In Germany, a production of a new kind is always followed by abundant imitators. The favorable reception which was

* These opinions are given by a person who supposes the observance of the unities to be almost indispensable to the rules of good poetry.

given to *Goetz von Berlichingen* seduced a great number of writers who could not surpass mediocrity, and who, destitute of the genius of Goethe, seemed determined to march the same road, and to regard rules as a yoke which they might shake off with impunity; imagining that, to appear original, nothing more was necessary than a collection of extravagant scenes, disjointed and without subject. Germany was shortly overflowed by a torrent of monstrous productions, some of which may contain beauties, but not one of them deserving to rank with *Goetz von Berlichingen*.

Goethe afterward produced a tragedy, under the title of *Clavigo*, which contains a well-known story, as it happened to M. de Beaumarchais in Spain, who is himself one of the principal persons of the drama. This piece is not without its beauties; but it is by no means equal to *Goetz von Berlichingen*, irregular as the latter is called.

In 1775, the German theatre was again enriched by pieces of a new kind, the *Monodrame* and the *Duodrame*, intermingled with music. The first piece of this kind was *Ariadne*, written by M. Brandes*; the music by M. Bender, chapel-master at Gotha, where the piece was first represented. This work increased the fame of that able composer, justly regarded as one of the first of Germany. *Medea*, the second production of that kind, was written by M. Gotter, and again furnished M. Bender with an opportunity to create new beauties.

In this year the Germans began to pay a more strict regard to costume, than had been customary on the theatre. Madam Brandes, who performed Ariadne, was the first who appeared in the Grecian costume, her dress having been made after designs from ancient monuments, and a description given by Winkelman: even her head-dress was according to an antique representation of Ariadne.

Goetz von Berlichingen, as represented at Berlin and Hamburg,

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* An author and an actor of considerable merit, who wrote the original of a piece which was performed some years ago at Covent Garden, under the title of The German Hotel.

was remarkable for the attention that was paid to costume. The very decoration of the apartments in which the knights appeared was observed at Hamburg.

The dream of a writer of the present age, M. Mercier, in his year 2040, was now, for the first time, realized; namely, that of publicly bestowing rewards on actors, as moral preachers and the disseminators of good taste. This happened in Germany, in the year 1775. The academy of Belles Lettres at Munich presented a gold medal to M. Nisser, by birth a Bavarian, and the director or manager of the theatre, as a reward for his zeal in the cultivation of good taste.

An event happened at Prague in the same year, which further displays the rapid progress of dramatic enthusiasm in countries where it was but newly known. Mademoiselle Tilly had performed in the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet with such nature and truth that, at the end of the piece, she was loudly called for by the audience, an honor which had never before been paid at Prague to either actor or author. She appeared, and was applauded with transport; but the managers were piqued that she had thought proper to take this step without asking their permission. Accordingly, they intended to discharge her: but, this intention having become public, her cause was immediately espoused. The following evening, when the piece next to be performed was given out, the pit unanimously demanded Romeo and Juliet, with Mademoiselle Tilly. The public of necessity was obeyed: Mademoiselle Tilly in Juliet was equally admirable, and being again called for, was obliged to appear. Verses were written in her praise, and the nobility and officers of the garrison made her a present of a thousand florins. It is to be remarked that this happened in a city where, ten years before, none but the rude pieces of the ancient theatre had been performed, nor were any other at that time permitted.

In 1775, another accident happened, which perhaps is unique in theatrical history.

The company of Josephi performed a piece written by the *Baron von Nesselrode*, chamberlain to the Elector Pala-

tine, entitled *Der Ahnen Stolz*, or, The Pride of Ancestry. The nobility of Dusseldorf, and in particular the Counsellor *Baron von Reuschenberg*, were so much offended by the piece, which they regarded as personal and local satire, that, by great endeavours, they obtained an order from government, which obliged Josephi and two of his actors to make a kind of recantation, and publicly ask pardon in terms that were prescribed. As these terms were little respectful to the piece, the author, enraged against the Baron, obliged him to fight a duel with pistols, and wounded him dangerously in the head.

(*To be continued.*)

DRAMATIC ANECDOTES.

IN 1751, a new comedy appeared on the French stage, called *Le Fat*, or The Coxcomb, which character not being well drawn, the comedy was condemned. The wit Piron, speaking of this condemnation, said—"It is just what I expected. A man is never so well acquainted with himself as to draw his own character."

It was the custom in France for the king to command the comedians to play before the court, when held at Versailles, Fontainbleau, or any other place. This command arrived on a day when the tragedy of *Mithridate*, by Racine, had been announced, and the best actors were obliged to perform at Versailles. When those who remained appeared on the stage at Paris, the hissing was so great that they were obliged to retire. Not being able to give another piece, they were generally inclined to dismiss the house, and return the money, *Le Grande* excepted, who had an utter aversion to this expedient. "No, no, my friends," said he, "the house is a good one, and must not be dismissed: only suffer me to address the audience." Accordingly he came on the stage with a very humble air, dressed for his part, approached the lamps, and

with a grievous countenance thus addressed the pit: "Ladies and gentlemen, our best performers, Messrs. Beaubourg, Ponteuil, and Baron, and Mademoiselle Du Clos, have been obliged to go and appear before their majesties: we assure you that we are sorry from our hearts not to have as much merit as they have, for it would give us still more pleasure than it would give you. We must either have shut up the theatre, or must now perform this tragedy. We honestly confess it will be performed by the worst of actors: nor can you well conceive how bad; for, since I am sent here to speak the truth, I am obliged to own that I play the part of Mithridates myself." A burst of laughter prevailed through the whole house, and the actors were willingly suffered to proceed.

The following anecdotes concerning farces are taken from a French author, and relate only to the French stage:

It is not here intended to give a history of ancient farces, which were almost numberless; for, according to Du Verdier, every person of wit formerly was a writer of them; and even in time the company called *Les Enfants sans Souci* continued to recite, and perform them; for, adds he, the farce was but of one act, and was the more esteemed for being short.

It cannot but be owned that the first authors of this exhibition made great approaches to true comedy. It may be added, that they were entirely original; their authors could not imitate the Greek and Latin, with which they were unacquainted.

From these ancient farces the poets of the last age formed many of their pieces in one act. It would be difficult precisely to mark the time when farces first appeared, but we know of none till toward the end of the fifteenth century. The authors who wrote for the theatres at that period composed pieces which were not published till long afterward, except those performed by *Les Confréres de la Passion, Les Enfants sans Souci, Les Histrions,* and *Les Clercs de la Bazoche**. Our fathers greatly esteemed the farce of *Pathelin*. Among the

* The Fraternity of the Passion; The Merry Blades; The Historians, or Story-tellers; and the Clerks of *La Bazoche*.

most known are those of *Tabarin, Turlupin, Gaultier Garguille, Gros-Guillaume,* and *Guillot Gorju**.

Gaultier Garguille, Gros-Guillaume, and *Turlupin,* were journeymen bakers in the fauxbourg Saint Laurent, at Paris. They were friends, and, taking a fancy to perform comedy, they composed pieces, or rather comic fragments, which have since been named *Turlupinades.* They assumed dresses such as their characters demanded.

Gaultier Garguille usually performed the Schoolmaster, or the Doctor, with a book of songs which he had written, and which he sold; and sometimes the master of a family, according to the subject of the piece. *Gros-Guillaume* adopted the character of a sententious person.

The demure *Turlupin* at some times was a valet, and at others a cut-purse fellow of intrigue. He performed with great animation, and with him witty replies were not wanting.

They hired a small tennis-court, near the *Porte Saint-Jacques,* which is at present the entrance to the *Fossé de L'Estrapade:* they had a portable theatre, and painted sail-cloth by the way of decoration.

Their performance was from one to two, especially for school-boys, and was repeated in the evening. The price of entrance was two *sous* six *deniers,* or about five farthings each.

The comedians of the Hotel *de Bourgogne* made complaints to Cardinal *de Richelieu* that three *Bateleurs* encroached upon their rights, and his eminence thought proper to judge of the affair himself. The *Bateleurs* were sent for to the *Palais Royal,* at that time called *Le Palais Cardinal,* and were ordered to perform under an alcove.

They chose one of their famous scenes, in which *Gros-Guillaume,* disguised like a woman melting in tears, endeavoured to appease the wrath of *Turlupin,* her husband, who would not listen to her, but threatened every instant to cut off her head with his sabre. This continued a full hour, the pretended wife being sometimes standing, sometimes kneeling, uttering a thousand whimsical things, endeavouring to move him in vain. His anger, on the contrary, did but increase. "You are an

* All proper names.

old hag," said he, "and I won't hear a word; I must and will kill you."—'Oh, dear husband,' answered she, 'I conjure you, by the excellent cabbage-soup which but yesterday I made for your dinner, and which you thought so nice, spare me!' At these words the husband melts, the sabre drops from his hands, and he exclaims—"Oh the jade! She knows my weak side. I can't live without my cabbage-soup; my mouth waters at the thought, &c."

In another of their scenes, Gaultier Garguille utters a thousand curses against maid-servants, adding, that he was obliged to change them every week; and, having recounted all their faults, finished with their dirtiness, twenty times repeating that he had found them combing their heads in the frying-pan and the porridge-pot, and that he was no longer surprised to find hairs in his omelet and soup.—'Oh,' answered Turlupin, 'I have found you the phenix of servant-maids; you shall meet with no more hairs in your soup, for she always combs her head into the wine-vat!'

Rude as these farces were, they pleased the cardinal, who, sending for the comedians, reproached them because their pieces were too dull, and ordered them to receive these comic actors into their company.

Gros-Guillaume had an extremely large belly, which inconvenience greatly contributed to his pleasantry. He wore two girdles on the stage, the one low and the other high; the effect of which was so whimsical, that he might have been mistaken for a hogshead, and his girdles for hoops. He wore no mask, but covered his face with flour, which he could manage so adroitly as, by the motion of his lips, to throw it over those to whom he spoke.

He was much afflicted with the stone, and often, when about to go on the theatre, felt such severe pain as to make him cry. Still he would persist; and, while he performed his part with a sorrowful face, and his eyes swimming in tears, he excited as much laughter as if his mind and body had been at ease.

Afflicting as this complaint was, he lived without cutting to the age of eighty, and it was even then supposed that his death

was occasioned by an accident. He had the effrontery to mimic, so as not to be mistaken, a magistrate who habitually made grimaces, for which a sentence was pronounced against him and his two companions. They fled; but *Gros-Guillaume* was thrown in prison, which brought on a fit that occasioned his death. *Gaultier Garguille* and *Turlupin* were so much afflicted that they both died in the same week.

The following story will give the reader some idea of the nature of the ancient farce. "In the month of August, "1550, an advocate fell into such melancholy and alienation of mind that he affirmed and believed himself to "be dead. For this reason, he would neither speak, laugh, "eat, nor walk, but continued in bed.

"He became at last so weak that it was every hour expected "he would expire, when a nephew of his wife happened to "arrive, who, after having ineffectually endeavoured to persuade his uncle to eat, began to think of effecting a cure by "artifice.

"With this intent he caused himself to be clothed in a "winding-sheet, in the manner of bodies about to be buried, "except that his face was uncovered, and to be carried and "placed on a table, with four lighted wax candles around him, "in the chamber where his uncle was lying.

"Every thing was so well imitated, that no one who saw "him could refrain from laughter; not even the very nurse of "the sick advocate, afflicted as she was, nor the nephew himself, could forbear, he being moved by the strange grimaces "of the persons around him endeavouring to contain themselves.

"The patient, for whom all this was done, asked his wife who "was that upon the table? and she answered, "It is the corpse "of your deceased nephew." 'Nay,' answered the sick man, "'how can he be dead, since I have just seen him laugh till "his sides ached;' to which the wife answered, that the "dead laughed.

"The advocate was desirous of making the experiment upon "himself, ordered them to bring a looking-glass, and tried

" whether he could laugh. Finding the thing very possible, " he was persuaded that the dead had that faculty, and with " this his cure began.

" The nephew, after having continued lying upon the table " about three hours, asked for something good, that he might " eat. A capon was presently brought to him, which he de- " voured, and likewise a pint of wine.

" Seeing this, the advocate asked whether the dead could " eat? And being assured they could and did, he then de- " manded some food, which was brought to him, and he eat " with a good appetite. From this time he continued to per- " form the actions of a man of sound understanding, and his " melancholy was gradually removed. This history was made " into a farce, then printed and often played before his ma- " jesty, Charles IX. I being present*."

Whether either of the two following instances of hypochondriacal affections are proper subjects for farce must be left to the consideration of dramatic writers.

In Heywood's Hierarchy (p. 551) is an account of a young man who had the misfortune to be so thoroughly persuaded he was dead as to insist upon being buried, lest his corpse should become offensive. The physicians had him wrapped in a winding-sheet, and taken toward the church-yard, but appointed two or three persons to waylay the bier, and demand who it was that they were carrying to be buried? Being informed of his name, they replied—" Ah, the world is well rid of him, a vicious, idle fellow! His friends had great reason to rejoice that he did not end his life at the gallows!" This was more than the dead man could endure, who, raising himself up, answered, they were very wicked so to wrong him; it was what he did not deserve, and if he were but alive, he would teach them to speak better of the dead! They continued, however, to use reproachful language, and load his character with obloquy; so that at length, unable to contain himself, he leaped from the bier, and fell on them

* *Diverses Leçons de Louis Guyon, tom.* i. *liv.* ii. *chap.* 15.

with such fury as not to be appeased till he was quite weary. This agitation acted as an alterative; he was awakened, as it were, from a trance, brought home and properly fed, and there he presently afterward recovered his health, strength, and understanding.

A physician of the middle ages relates, that he had a patient who imagined that he was perpetually frozen, and therefore, in the very dog-days, would sit before the fire, and declare he should never be warm unless his whole body was in a flame. Had he not been confined, he was desirous to lie down on the fire, and was so tormented by his fears that he could not sleep. To effect his cure, the physician wrapped him in sheep-skin from head to foot, cautiously sprinkled the wool, which might easily be extinguished, with inflammable spirits, and then set it on fire. Care was taken not to injure him, though, being sufficiently scorched, after dancing and leaping some time, he called aloud, "I am well! I am well! I am rather too hot!" By this means the cure was effected.

Corneille wrote a tragedy called Andromeda, with machinery, to divert Lewis XIV. when a boy. The decorations were so grand that they were engraved. The piece was revived in 1682 with great success, and with the addition of a living horse to represent Pegasus. This horse played his part admirably, and pranced as much in the air as he could have done on terra firma. The Italians have often brought on living horses in their grand operas, but bound with such precaution as to produce little effect. Other means were taken in the tragedy of Andromeda to give the horse a warlike ardor: before being hoisted by machinery up in the air, he was kept fasting so long that his appetite was extreme, and when he appeared a groom behind the scenes stood shaking oats in a sieve. Pressed by hunger the horse neighed, pawed with his feet, and perfectly answered the end designed. By this means the piece had a great run, for every body was eager to visit the famed quadruped Roscius.

An anecdote, which Davies gives, is truly ludicrous. Rich, the famous harlequin and manager of Covent Garden, having been told that Garrick had purchased a half share of the Drury Lane patent, instead of seeing a thing so fatal to his interest in a true light, amused himself with mimicing that inimitable actor. With the players round him, some of them ready to applaud, some pitying his folly, and others despising his ignorance, old Rich would fall upon his knees, after Garrick's manner as he said, repeat Lear's curse on his daughter, and tickle himself with his own imagined superiority.

MISCELLANIES.

To the lover of stage history, how many pleasing ideas of past times, tinctured by sweet melancholy, and names dear to recollection, do the following verses excite! They are to be found in the journals of the time.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. WILKS,

THE ORIGINAL SIR HARRY WILDAIR.

In Congreve's * dismal scene of yawning tombs,
Where bloodless spectres met, ere spring of day:
Drums, fiddles, truncheons, *billets-doux*, and plumes,
Lutes, laurels, racks, in wild confusion lay;
And all the lumber of the player's trade
A strange, confus'd, and useless chaos made.

Here sat the Genius of the British stage,
Her bosom loose, her unbound tresses shed;
The sickly taste of a corrupted age
She wept not—but her heroes dead.
Porter and Booth she number'd in the train,
And wept her honors lost, but wept in vain.

Their various glories she compar'd in song,
Judicious Barry † she with Porter join'd;
Old Betterton, and Booth with silver tongue,
Employ'd at once her grief, and fill'd her mind:
Grateful to Oldfield's sweet much honor'd shade,
For matchless pleasure matchless grief she paid.

* Vide Mourning Bride. † Mrs. Barry.

Thus did her grief her tuneful tongue employ,
When o'er the place a blasting gust there flew,
That bore this voice—"Farewel, all manly joy!
"And, oh! true British comedy, adieu!
"Wilks is no more!"—The Genius dropt her voice—
She fell—the rest the grieving Muse supplies.

Unhappy Genius of the British stage,
Now thou art fall'n indeed—to rise no more;
Nature will not forsake her friend in age,
But with her Wilks now tread th' Elysian shore;
Farewel, O born with ev'ry art to please,
Politeness, grace, gentility, and ease.

What can the peerless Cibber do alone,
'Mongst bodies so opake, so bright a ray?
Like life, 'midst heaps of uninformed stone,
He shews the vileness of the neighb'ring clay:
So shines the Moon upon the sable night,
Unable to reflect her glorious light.

Now, Rich, pursue with speed thy mimic task;
Now thy new fabric rises to the day;
Inform it with thy spirit of grotesque,
And bid the Genius laugh her cares away:
Tho' not so nobly, let us still excel,
And Harlequin exert his magic spell.

At that the Genius rais'd her languid eyes,
And starting forth, "Nor be that all she said;
"A Quin, a Younger, and a Hipp'sley rise,
"To cheer the gloom that o'er my realm is spread;
"Be it their task to prop the falling stage,
"And make sense please, when Cibber's lost in age *."

EXTRAORDINARY CHILDREN.

The well-authenticated records, which exist, of the manner in which children have been unnaturally stimulated to early exertion are numerous indeed; and are calculated to give far greater pain than pleasure: for the instances, in which such children have become extraordinary men, are very rare.

Many children have shewn early marks of genius, whose pa-

* The interest we take, in the memory of these admired actors, and in the above poem, is considerable; and, if any correspondent can inform the editor by whom it was written, he will esteem it a favor.

rents either had not the folly, the leisure, or the assiduity, to take any uncommon trouble to render this genius premature; and, at a proper age, that is, when such children have arrived at manhood, mind has seldom failed to flourish, to the delight and benefit of mankind.

The parents who, from poverty, vanity, or avarice, have compelled these early plants to an undue growth, by over heating their rising faculties, have almost uniformly destroyed them. It is not long since a mother, whom it would be cruelty to point out so as to be known, having one of these extraordinary children, and being asked, at the distance of six or eight months, by a lady who had seen it exhibit, what was become of the divine little creature, replied, bursting into tears, "Oh! Madam, my child is become an idiot." This is a fact.

Just at this time, owing to the extreme admiration that has been bestowed upon Master Betty, it is an act of public duty to warn parents against the misery they might be too prompt to entail, upon those children that would otherwise become admirable, indeed, when at maturity; and to state to them, as a fact well known to the most accurate observers of children, that any child, of lively faculties, if taken at an early age, may be stimulated to the performance of wonders: but that this is the greatest mischief that can be done to them.

In the summer of 1769, a comedy, called Dr. Last in his Chariot, appeared at Foote's theatre in the Haymarket; and a child was, at that time, by the efforts of an admiring, busy, vain woman, the object of public amazement; of which the following is a sufficient proof:

EPILOGUE,

Written by the Author of the Comedy, and spoken by a little Girl, four Years and a Half old.*

Ladies and gentlemen, they've sent me out—
But I'm afraid to tell you what about;
Because 'twere bold in me, perhaps, you'll say,
To come to ask you how you like the play;

* Mr. Bickerstaff.

Yet that's my business; nay, more free to make,
I'm come to beg you'd like it for my sake.
The author took me in his arms, just now;
My dear, says he,—he kiss'd me too, I vow—
If you'll go out and make the audience clap,
I'll give you ribbons and a fine new cap:
Besides, he promis'd me, next time he comes
Behind the scenes, to bring me sugar-plums:
But whatsoe'er you think the play to be,
When you go home I'm sure you'll talk of me.
Says Lady Stingo to Sir Gilbert Mild,
" At Foote's! Sir Gilbert, have you seen the child?
'Tis really a *curiosity* to view her;
Our little Betsy is a mountain to her:
Such action, such a tongue—and yet I query
If she be five years old—a very fairy!"
Sir Gilbert answers with a peevish nod,
" Pshaw! let the little hussy have a rod.
There are old folks enough to play the fool;
Children, my lady, should be sent to school."
And so they should, the naughty ones, no doubt,
Who'll neither books nor needle learn without:
To be at work my fingers still are itching—
These flounces here are all of my own stitching.
[*Taking up and shewing her frock.*
But is my prate dislik'd? For, after all,
I am but young, 'tis true, and somewhat small;
And taller ladies, I must needs confess,
Might speak an Epilogue with more address.
However, some few things I have to plead;
First, 'pon my word and credit, I'm a maid.
Will that pass here for merit?—I don't know—
I'm a new face—which generally does so.
And if you want me louder, taller, bolder,
Have patience—I shall mend, as I grow older.

In this instance, we are to contemplate a child, of four years and a half old, appearing upon a public theatre, before a large assembly, and pronouncing a discourse, in rhyme and measure, of forty lines. To this the faculties of a child of that age are in every respect inadequate. What a succession of coercive measures must have been employed! The kind of measures used is but a secondary consideration: flattery may be made as fatal a stimulant as fear.

And what were the acquirements necessary for the tasks un-

dertaken by this child? Of which the above is but a single instance, for she was often publicly exhibited.

She must have had uncommon habitual powers of memory. The memory of childhood is great; but always with little connection, unless when laid under painful restraint.

Right accentuation, articulation, and loudness of voice, were no less requisite. How must the tender organs, of a child of four years and a half old, have been reiteratedly strained, before they could become audible in such a place.

But the most vitiated part of the instruction she must have received relates to action. She must have been taught premature cunning, which is the corner stone of vice; premature coquetry; vanity in the extreme; and effrontery that, in a feeling mind, must at once have excited pain and disgust. A child, of four years and a half old, instructed to come upon a public stage, and proclaim herself a maid!

Such are the qualities which are generally produced, by those who torment their children into premature, imaginary excellence: for, in spite of every effort, they are at best but children; and the folly, or vice, of the parent greatly exceeds the abilities of the child.

The mania for premature excellence, however, continues. On Monday, June 17, a child named Master Wigley, we are informed, of four years and a half old, played several military movements on the bugle-horn with a strength and sweetness of tone superior to most performers on that instrument.

A report is spread, for the truth of which we do not vouch, that a theatre is fitting up, under royal patronage, for a company of German children, equally excellent, no doubt, with their English competitors.

Since the above was written, these children have appeared at the theatre that was Mr. Dibdin's, in Leicester-place, and which was on this occasion announced to be under the immediate patronage of her majesty. The eldest boy appears to be

about fifteen, and has considerable merit. His tall sister is probably older, and not younger, than himself: her talents are by no means above mediocrity. But their younger brother, master Frederic Schirmer (Schirmer is the name of the family) has intelligence that, had he been well instructed, would have made him a highly promising boy. Instead however of good instuction, he is already become an adept in buffoonery and grimace, which disgraces, while it destroys, good sense. The family notwithstanding have, on the whole, considerable merit: how far they may meet that encouragement which can give them permanency it is difficult to foresee. Such a theatre might certainly serve as an excellent school, for those who study the German language; and to them it may very properly be recommended.

Instead of noticing another child under the head of new performers, a Miss Fisher, who appeared at Drury Lane, June 6th, in the character of Little Pickle, in the farce of the Spoiled Child, a brief account of her has been reserved for this place. People of understanding begin to be weary of so much childish exhibition.

Miss Fisher was incorrect, outrée, and offensive, in many parts; yet, it may justly be affirmed, her performance, as a child, is nearly on a par with any that has been attempted. If her parents and friends love her, sufficiently to take proper care of her education, she has so much intelligence that she scarcely can fail of becoming a good actress. As a child, her performance deserves great praise; but had it been the performance of a woman, it would have deserved, at least, no less blame.

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

The song in the Beggar's Opera, "Since law was made for every degree," produced a torrent of applause of an extraordinary kind. The application to state delinquents was so pointed

that the audience burst into the most vehement shouts of applause, which were reiterated and prolonged for a quarter of an hour. Mrs. Mountain and Miss De Camp were obliged to quit the stage again and again, amidst the tumult of acclamation, and Mr. Kelly was called on to sing it no less than four times.—*Morn. Chron. May* 13.

It has not been the custom hitherto, in the THEATRICAL RECORDER, to notice musical dramas, not acted at Drury Lane, Covent Garden, or the Haymarket; but the following event is memorable, not only in its action, but as it characterizes the times. The account that is given below is taken from the Morning Chronicle:

KING'S THEATRE.

"A riot took place at this theatre on Saturday evening last, June 15, which threatened to produce the most serious consequences to the property of the house. Our readers will recollect that an intimation was, some time ago, given to the directors of the opera, by some reforming bishops, that, if the entertainments were not regularly closed before midnight, prosecutions would be commenced against them. Desirous of complying with this religious mandate, the directors have ever since abridged the performances on Saturday evenings; and on Saturday, instead of the very long ballet of *Ossian*, they substituted *Paul et Virginie*, between the first and second acts of the opera, and gave only the second act of *Ossian*, at the close. This act contains the most attractive part of the ballet, and particularly the brilliant *Pas de Deux* of the Des Hayes, which is a *chef-d'œuvre* of the art. The result of this arrangement, however, was, that the curtain dropped at half past eleven. The spectators seemed disappointed, and a loud call was made for the ballet to go on. The band in the orchestra closed their books, and were quitting their seats, when one of the books was seized by a young gentleman and flung on the stage. This appeared to be the signal for action. A number of persons crowded on the stage. The book was flung back into the pit;

and the manager was called for. Mr. Kelly came forward to explain the conduct of the house, and respectfully to state that they could only bow with submission to the injunctions that had been given them. But he was not heard. The audience called for the bishops who had given the orders; and Mr. Kelly was struck a violent blow. He defended himself, and was with difficulty rescued by some gentlemen who interfered in his favor. The tumult now increased to an outrageous attack on the chandeliers, benches, musical instruments, and every thing else within reach, and the theatre was threatened with utter demolition. Considerable damage was done, and it was with difficulty that the affray was quelled. We are sorry to have to record this occurrence, so little creditable to public decorum: and we regret it the more because several persons were observed to be active in the riot, whose rank in life ought to have prevented them from setting such an example to heedless boys. We understand they will be prosecuted for the damage."

On Tuesday, June 13, the following address was delivered to the subscribers as they entered the theatre:

'Mr. Goold feels it incumbent on him to state to the nobility, gentry, subscribers to the opera, and the public, his sincere mortification that, during his absence from the theatre on Saturday night last, any thing should have occurred to the displeasure of any part of the audience.

'Having, on the best calculation which could be formed, been persuaded that the time allotted for the entertainment of the public would be exactly filled by the opera of La Clemenza di Scipione, the divertisement of Paul et Virginie, and the second act of the ballet of Ossian, which has met with so decided a preference over the other two acts, he arranged it in the order announced in the bills of the day. He can only express his deep regret (as the performance was over so much earlier than could be expected) that he was not present to exercise his authority to have the last act of the ballet performed, the only reason for the intended omission having been

from a conviction that the entertainments of the evening would have continued until five minutes before twelve o'clock. Mr. Goold trusts this explanation will prove satisfactory.'

"This very handsome address made a lively impression on the house, and the opera of *Zaire*, with the ballet of *La Belle Laitiere*, went off with the utmost eclat. The damages were all repaired, and every thing was in its place."

From this advertisement it appears that Mr. Goold considers the public as having a right to complain; and it may be inferred that conciliation, instead of prosecutions for damages, was his hope and desire.

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

"On Saturday night, June 15, this theatre closed for the season with *Lovers Vows* and *The Midnight Hour*. At the end of the play, Mr. Kemble came forward, and addressed the audience in the following words:

'Ladies and gentlemen, before the curtain drops for this season, permit me to express the high sense of gratitude which the proprietors of Covent Garden entertain for the distinguished patronage which they have received at your hands. They trust that this condescending encouragement will be a sufficient pledge to the public of their intention to persevere in those efforts for their amusement, which they are proud to reflect have been honored with such general approbation.'

"Mr. Kemble retired amidst loud plaudits from all parts of the house. The season, we fear, has been a poor one, notwithstanding the exertions that were made; for several of the pieces brought forward failed entirely, and none of them proved eminently successful."—*Morn. Chron. June* 17.

The nights on which the theatres actually closed may be seen in the Monthly List, pp. 71 and 72.

On Tuesday, June 18, at four o'clock P. M. departed this life, at his apartments at Knightsbridge, in the 78th year of his

age, Arthur Murphy, Esq. a barrister at law, and a bencher of Lincoln's Inn. He lived in the closest friendship with the most polished authors and greatest lawyers of his time. His knowledge of the classics was profound; his translations of the Roman histories enlarged his fame; his dramatic productions were inferior to none of the time in which he flourished. The fire of the poet was particularly adorned by the refined taste of the critic. The moderation of his ambition, and the modesty of his nature, inclined his genius to court the retirement of his study, in preference to the pursuits of an active life. As a man of high talents and a warm heart he lived honored, and as a very devout Christian he was long resigned to the will of his Creator: in the words he was often heard to repeat from Pope—

> Half taught by reason, half by mere decay,
> To welcome death and calmly pass away*.

COSTUME.

Dress of Miss Decamp in the comic opera of The Soldier's Return.

The three Indian figures are:

A Chaubdar, or Assahburdar; with a silver stick, the badge of his office. He derives his name from *chaub*, a club.

A Soonta-burdar, next in rank to a Chaubdar, with a short silver stick.

A Khaunsamaun, or house steward.

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* *The above account is likewise transcribed from the Morning Chronicle, and was doubtless written by relation or particular friend of the late Mr. Murphy.*

MONTHLY LIST, FOR MAY AND JUNE, 1805.

DRURY-LANE.

MAY

25. The Honey Moon - - - - - - - Love, Youth, and Folly.
27. The West Indian (Benefit. Mr. and Mrs. H. Johnstone) - - - Ditto.
28. The Rivals - - - - - - - - - - - The United Britons, and Ditto.
29. The Way to Keep Him - - - - The True Lover's Knot, and Ditto.
30. The Jealous Wife (Benefit. Mr. Fosbrooke) - - - - - - - - - - The United Britons, and The Castle of Sorrento.
31. Youth, Love, and Folly - - - - - The Spoiled Child, and The Wedding Day.

JUNE

3. John Bull (Benefit. Mr. and Mrs. H. Johnson) - - - - - - - - - - A new Scotch Ballet, and Katherine and Petruchio.
4. Pizarro - - - - - - - - - - - - The Virgin Unmask'd.
5. The Country Girl - - - - - - - The Soldier's Return.
6. Romeo and Juliet - - - - - - - The United Britons, and Spoiled Child.
7. Venetian Outlaw (Benefit. Mrs. Powell and Mrs. Ansell) - - - The Sultan; and Youth, Love, and Folly.
8. The Busy Body - - - - - - - - Bon Ton.
10. The Honey Moon - - - - - - - The Spoiled Child.
11. The School of Scandal (By Command) - - - - - - - - - - - - Personation; and Youth, Love, and Folly.
12. All in the Wrong (Benefit. Mr. Dignum) - - - - - - - - - - - Interlude of Catches and Glees, and No Song No Supper.
13. The Honey Moon - - - - - - - The Devil to Pay.
14. Every One has his Fault (Benefit. Miss Fisher) - - - - - - - - - Harlequin Skeleton, and The Spoiled Child.
15. She Stoops to Conquer - - - - - True Lover's Knot, and The Irishman in London.
17. The Way to get Married (Benefit. Mr. Raimond) - - - - - - - The Wake, and The Spoiled Child.
18. The Rivals - - - - - - - - - - - Ditto, and Rosina.
19. Every One has his Fault (Last Night of the present Season) - The Wedding Day.
20. The Spoiled Child (Extra Night. Benefit. Mr. Lacy) - - - - - - The Sultan, The United Britons, and Imitations by Mr. Caulfield.

COVENT-GARDEN.

MAY

25. Macbeth (Benefit. Mr. and Mrs. H. Siddons) - - - - - - - - - - The Child of Nature.
27. The Mourning Bride (Benefit of Mr. C. Kemble) - - - - - - - Love à la Mode.
28. Laugh When you Can (By Command) - - - - - - - - - - - - The Escapes.
29. The Road to Ruin (Benefit. Mrs. Mattocks) - - - - - - - - - - British Fortitude, and The Lake of Lausanne.

30. Guilty or Not Guilty? (Benefit. Mr. Waddy, Mrs. Dibdin) - - Recruiting Serjeant, and Lover's Quarrels.
31. The School of Reform (Benefit. Mr. Emery) - - - - - - - - - Rival Sailors, and Raising the Wind.

JUNE

3. The Surrender of Calais - - - - A Tale of Mystery.
4. King Henry III. (Part the First) (Benefit. Mr. Brandon) - - - - The Farmer.
5. The Cure for the Heart-Ache (Benefit. Mr. Rock) - - - - - Spanish Dollars, and The Rival Soldiers.
6. The Man of the World (Benefit. Mr. Blanchard) - - - - - - - - Thomas and Sally, and The Turnpike Gate.
7. King Richard the Third (Benefit. Messrs. Marshall, Beverly, and Field) - - - - - - - - - - - The Shipwrecked Sailor, and Fortune's Frolic.
8. Lovers' Vows - - - - - - - - - The Midnight Hour.
10. The Wheel of Fortune (Benefit. Mr. Glassington) - - - - - - - The Shipwrecked Sailor, and Raising the Wind.
11. The Man of the World (Benefit. Mr. Claremont) - - - - - - - Ditto, and The Turnpike Gate.
12. The School of Reform - - - - - The Birth Day.
13. The Road to Ruin - - - - - - - The Rival Sailors, and Fortune's Frolic.
14. The Beaux Stratagem - - - - - Ditto, and The Jew and the Doctor.
15. Lovers' Vows (Last Night of the present Season) - - - - - - - - The Midnight Hour.
17. The Wonder (Extra Night. Benefit for the widow of Mr. Macklin) - - - - - - - - - - - Love à la Mode.

HAYMARKET.

JUNE

8. Guilty or Not Guilty? - - - - - Love Laughs at Locksmiths.
10. The Mountaineers - - - - - - - The Village Lawyer.
11. Ways and Means - - - - - - - - The Hunter of the Alps, and Love Laughs at Locksmiths.
12. Ditto - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Ditto, Ditto.
13. The Road to Ruin - - - - - - - The Jew and the Doctor.
14. The Heir at Law - - - - - - - - The Agreeable Surprise.
15. Guilty or Not Guilty? - - - - - The Hunter of the Alps.
17. The Mountaineers - - - - - - - A Mogul Tale.
18. Ways and Means - - - - - - - - Blue Devils, and The Review.
19. John Bull (by Command) - - - Raising the Wind.
20. Inkle and Yarico - - - - - - - - Mrs. Wiggins, and The Hunter of the Alps.
21. The Jew and the Doctor - - - - Love Laughs at Locksmiths, and The Village Lawyer.
22. The Poor Gentleman - - - - - - A Mogul Tale.
24. The Iron Chest - - - - - - - - - Fortune's Frolic.
25. The Mountaineers - - - - - - - The Hunter of the Alps.
26. John Bull - - - - - - - - - - - Peeping Tom.
27. The Heir at Law - - - - - - - - The Village Lawyer.